J. D. Davis.

O! how pleasant and refreshing is prayer
When bowed before the heavenly throne
We feel that we of heavens blessings share
And through the redeemers name can claim

Joshua

Joshua M Davis

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed."-

[illegible]

them as their own.



Look forward a little when all the noise and tumult and business of this world shall have ceased forever. Page 152

GUIDE FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES

TO THE

HOLY SAVIOUR

IN

THEIR WAY TO IMMORTALITY.

BY REV. J. O. FISK.

PUBLISHED BY THE
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,



A

GUIDE FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES

OF THE

HOLY SAVIOUR,

IN

THEIR WAY TO IMMORTALITY,

FORMING

A SEQUEL TO PERSUASIVES TO EARLY PIETY.

BY REV. J. G. PIKE.

"Christian is the highest style of man."

IN SOME PARTS ABRIDGED.

PUBLISHED BY THE

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

150 NASSAU-STREET, NEW-YORK.

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PREFATORY ADDRESS.

WHILE, my young friend, a few fleeting years will fix you in that awful world where the business of life will no longer engage, and its amusements will have no power to charm; while every moment hurries on your final hour, and every beating pulse beats nearer to the last; while endless ages rise in solemn succession before you, and death, at the door, is ready to introduce you to those unbounded and amazing scenes;—O what is worth a thought except the favor of God, and glory in the heavens! O what is worthy of a moment's care, compared with making your calling and election sure! To this momentous subject I now solicit your attention. The design of another little volume,* which I have addressed to the young, is to urge them to make that religion their choice which renders its possessor rich in poverty, and happy in affliction; secure in danger, and triumphant in death. In this the principal design is the benefit of those who have found the path of peace. May I address you as such a happy person? Are you a partaker of that grace which comes from God, and leads the soul to him? Is he your Father and your Friend? Is the blessed Jesus your Savior? Can you contemplate heaven as your home, and read your title clear to an everlasting mansion in that happy country which lies beyond the stormy sea of time? If you can, *rejoice in the Lord always.* The things unseen will not deceive you. They will not perish, when

* Persuasives to Early Piety.

all that is seen shall fade, and droop, and die. Let earth, if it will, be all delusion, for heaven is all reality. Let all below be treacherous shadow, for all above is enduring substance. If, my young friend, through grace, those unseen realities are your portion, the cross of Christ your glory, and heaven your home, still you have need to *grow in grace*, and *in the knowledge of* your *Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

To be a Christian indeed, is widely different from what multitudes suppose. The Christian character, as delineated in the Scriptures, is one of a most peculiar and elevated nature. It rises almost as much above the ideas apparently entertained of it by many professors of the Gospel, as it does above those of the careless followers of the world. In times like these, when no prison opens its doors to receive Christian victims as its prey, when no flames call for martyrs to glut the persecutor's rage, it is an easy thing to profess religion; and if to add to that profession a character fair in human sight, and an attention to religious privileges, were sufficient to constitute a Christian, many would deserve that exalted name; but all this, and much more than this, will not constitute a Christian. A Christian in reality, as described by the Spirit of God, is one whom grace makes free, and enriches with a thousand blessings; whom grace prepares for glory, and allures to heaven; whose chief business is with the things beyond the grave. He is a new creature in Christ Jesus; a child of God; a member of Christ; a stranger on earth; a traveler to glory; a future companion and equal to the angels of light; an heir of heaven; even here one of that family that will all meet at length before the throne of the Most High; and whose love and hatred, hopes and fears, desires and tempers, life and conduct, will bear a likeness to the new and happy relations he sustains. Such is a Christian. How different is the religion which produces this change in an immortal being

from that cold, formal, uninteresting thing, which the world esteems religion. Is this, my young friend, the character which you sustain? or do you view it as one too highly elevated for your desires and aims? If you do, will you in the last hours of life maintain the same opinion? When this momentary scene of care and vanity is closing upon you for ever! when it no longer matters what you suffered or what you enjoyed; when the overwhelming scenes of the eternal world are ready to burst upon your soul, will you then think that piety could be too elevated, or the *Christian upon earth too nearly like the Christian in heaven?* If you *do* seriously believe that, in your dying moments, you will think it possible to be too pious; if you do indeed believe that, when going to meet your God, you will think it possible to love, or serve, or honor him too much; then slight the advice this little book contains. If you can suppose that when you have plunged into the unseen world, and are fixed in happiness or wo for more myriads of millions of years than there are drops in the ocean; that then you will think you could be too earnest, too prayerful, too diligent, in preparing for an everlasting state; if you can indeed think so, then read no further. But if instead of this, you feel convinced, that when you die, and come to meet your God, you will think all faith weak, all love cold, all diligence carelessness, all labor idleness, and all piety scarcely worth the name, compared with that faith, and love, and zeal, and piety, which the eternal God, the eternal Savior, an immortal soul, and an endless heaven demand; if you will think so; and will you not as surely as you are born to die? O then aim at nobler piety than that which satisfies so many! Stay not in the vale beneath, but as at death you will wish to have done, soar to the heights above. O learn to live as having soon to die, that you may die assured of living with God for ever!

The principal object of this little book, is to assist you in

your Christian pilgrimage, though at times it may contain a few lines more suitable to those who are strangers to religion, than to those who have embraced the Gospel; for perhaps some that know not God, may glance over the following pages.

Let the writer be permitted to add, that in drawing up this small volume with the design of assisting youthful piety, he has endeavored to draw instructions from the Sacred Volume, that only fountain of real wisdom.

That holy book declares, that neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. To his all-important blessing the writer therefore now commends this little volume.

Derby, July 16th, 1823.

A GUIDE

FOR

YOUNG DISCIPLES.

CHAPTER I.

A BRIEF SCRIPTURAL DELINEATION OF THE ATTRIBUTES AND PERFECTIONS OF GOD, AND ON CHRISTIAN DEVOTEDNESS TO HIM.

§ 1. Were you, my young friend, going to spend one hour in England, and then never to see it more, but afterwards to pass threescore years in India, of which country would you desire the most extensive knowledge? Would you not reason, the knowledge that will benefit me but for one hour in a country which, after that, I shall never visit again, is unworthy of a thought, compared with that knowledge which will be useful to me for sixty years? Were you to spend that one hour in company with persons whose favor or displeasure would render it either a happy or a wretched hour; and were you to pass the following sixty years with those whose smile or frown would make them all years of happiness or years of pain, whose favor would you be most anxious to enjoy? Would you not argue, the smiles or the frowns of

those who shall cheer or embitter but one hour, and whom then I shall leave for ever, are of little moment; but their friendship, who must render me happy or wretched for sixty years, is ten thousand times more important? Apply these thoughts to your state in this world, and the next. Here you have a little while to spend; but, compared with the endless life that awaits you there, it is infinitely less than an hour, when compared with sixty years. Of which world is the knowledge most important to you? of that where your life is the twinkling of an eye? or that where eternal ages lie stretched before the view of the astonished soul? The friendship or displeasure of your fellow-creatures may cheer or embitter life's short hour: the friendship of your God will brighten and bless your whole eternity; or his displeasure make eternal years one scene of darkness, bitterness, and wo. How worthless, to a creature born for eternity, is all knowledge, compared with a holy acquaintance with God! how despicable all friendship, compared with his friendship and love!

§ 2. The book of nature may teach much respecting God—may at least declare his eternal power and godhead; but it is the book of grace alone that unfolds the brighter glories of Jehovah. Would you be intimate with God, the God of heaven, not with the idol philosophers frame in their imagination? then search the Scriptures. That holy volume represents the adorable God as possessed of those excellencies which should excite the deepest reverence and the most fervent love in the human heart.

"God is a Spirit." He "created the heavens and the

earth." He "said, Let there be light, and there was light." The sun obeys his voice, and the stars of heaven appear at his command. He is the one Jehovah, "the only true God." Heaven is his throne, and the earth his footstool. He reigneth King for ever. He is clothed with majesty. "Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." He is "the King eternal, immortal, invisible; the only wise God." To his enemies he is "a consuming fire." He is "able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

In providence, and in the works of nature, the power and majesty of God are displayed. "He killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up. He maketh poor and maketh rich." He "raiseth the stormy wind," or "maketh the storm a calm." He turneth rivers into a wilderness, or water-springs into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness; "or a dry desert to a watered field." "He saith to the snow, be thou on the earth." He "giveth rain, and sendeth waters upon the fields." He feedeth the fowls of the air, and clotheth the lilies of the field with more than kingly glory: and so extensive is his providential care, that without him not a sparrow falleth to the ground.

The sublime description of the majesty and glory of God, in the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, is as much superior to the loftiest descriptions which unassisted poets or philosophers have given of the Deity, as the God it represents is superior to the idols they extolled. "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and com-

prehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity."

Survey this universe. Behold its oceans, in themselves a watery world. No line has ever measured their unfathomable depths. The swiftest ship would spend months or years in crossing them; yet to God those vast and fathomless oceans are so insignificant, that he *measureth the waters* of the world *in the hollow of his hand.* Behold the heavens; the sun, the moon, the stars of light; how brilliant is their glory! how immense their distances! but God *meteth out heaven with a span;* measures with *a span*, almost the least of measures, that vast and boundless field of grandeur and of glory. Behold the earth, its vast islands, its cloud-capt mountains, its unmeasured deserts; the fertile lands of its immense continents, where numerous nations find ample room for their residence, and which require a line thousands of miles in extent to measure either their length or their breadth; but what are these vast regions, and this vast earth, before Jehovah! *He comprehendeth the dust of the earth in a measure, and taketh up the islands as an atom.* Survey the nations; perhaps a thousand millions of human beings. How immense the number! yet to God, so insignificant, that they *are as a drop of a bucket, and as the small dust* which lies unheeded *on the balance;* as nothing, less than nothing, and vanity.

§ 3. Now glance at the unsearchable wisdom and infinite knowledge of God. "He is the Lord of hosts, wonderful in counsel. God the only wise. He seeth in secret. He seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. He searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts." He is not an inattentive spectator of what passes in his wide empire. "By him are actions weighed." "The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men, he considereth all their works." In this vast survey, he beholds his children with peculiar love. "The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy, to deliver their soul from death;" "to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him."

Would any wish to hide themselves from his all-piercing eye, it is impossible; for "in him we live, and move, and have our being." He smiles in heaven; he frowns in hell. The veil of night, which hides all things from the eyes of man, hides nothing from his eye. No spot in the universe can be found that is beyond the reach of his arm, or where it should cease to be said, *Thou, O God, seest me!* "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from

thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

§ 4. This adorable and all-seeing God is holy and amiable in the highest degree. He is "glorious in holiness." "There is none holy as the Lord." "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity." "Just and true are his ways." He is the "faithful God," "who keepeth truth for ever."

"High o'er the earth his mercy reigns,
"And reaches to the utmost sky;
"His truth to endless years remains,
"When lower worlds dissolve and die."

Venerable and lovely in his holiness, he is, if possible, still more lovely in his goodness and mercy. He is "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." "Of great mercy." "A merciful God." "There is none good but God." He proclaimed his name "Jehovah, Jehovah God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin." The fountain of his goodness pours forth many streams. He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." He is "kind to the unthankful and the evil." He is "a God ready to pardon"—"is gracious and full of compassion—is good to all—and his tender mercies are over all his works." "He is plenteous in mercy and truth." The world might drink at the ocean of his love, and the ocean still be full. "He giveth grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

He is the Father of all the righteous; "their Father in heaven;" "and like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." A stronger principle of love than natural affection actuates him: "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him." Parental love, in its strongest form, cannot rival his. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee." Love like this cannot be measured. "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens." Who can measure the heights of heaven? or stretch a line from the east unto the west? Yet this were an easier task, than to tell the extent of divine love. "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." This charming excellence is his delight. "He delighteth in mercy;" "and taketh pleasure in those that fear him, and that hope in his mercy." To sum up all in a few words, "GOD IS LOVE."

His richest love is the love unfolded in the Gospel; love, like an ocean, which has neither shore nor bottom, measure, beginning, nor end. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "Herein is love, not that we loved God,

but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." A pious writer observes,

"When God gave us his Son, he gave us an infinitely greater gift than the world: the Creator is infinitely more glorious than the creature, and the Son of God is the Creator of all things. God can make innumerable worlds by the word of his mouth; he has but one only Son, and he spared not his only Son, but gave him to the death of the cross for us all. God's love to his people is from everlasting to everlasting: but from everlasting to everlasting there is no manifestation of it known, or conceivable by us, that can be compared to this. The light of the sun is always the same, but it shines brightest to us at noon: the cross of Christ was the noon-tide of everlasting love, the meridian splendor of eternal mercy. There were many bright manifestations of the same love before, but they were like the light of the morning, that shines more and more unto the perfect day; and that perfect day was when Christ was on the cross, when darkness covered all the land."

Pursuing his schemes of love and mercy, he appears as "the God of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory by Jesus Christ." "He loveth those who love his Son." "It is the Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom." "And God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city."

§ 5. All this love is like himself, eternal. "His mercy endureth for ever;" and "is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him." "The heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax

old like a garment; but his salvation shall be for ever."

He who manifests this love is "the eternal God." "A thousand years in his sight are as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." "He inhabiteth eternity;" and such is that eternity, that, compared with it, one day and a thousand years are alike; they are both so insignificant, that one appears as long as the other.

§ 6. What awe, what reverence should these views of God inspire! His works, how glorious! but himself, how infinitely majestic! When compared with him, his vast creation is mean, as a speck of floating dust; and sun and stars, like momentary sparks of fire, just seen and forgotten. Angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, shine with a glory which the loftiest language scarcely describes. Yet thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, cherubim and seraphim, in prostrate homage bow before him, and veil their faces, and cast their crowns at his feet, and cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who is, and was, and is to come." While such is their homage, how reverent should be yours! You, a mote, a worm, an insect, compared with them; yet they, with all their radiant majesty, insects, compared with him. While they in his presence shrink into nothing, and less than nothing, what are you? How great a God is our God! Cherish the deepest reverence for him. Should such a God be treated with irreverence? Should he be mocked in professed devotion, "with solemn sounds on a thoughtless tongue?" Abhor and watch against this common

sin, and humble yourself in deep abasement before him, for doubtless it has often polluted your soul.

§ 7. What deep concern for a full assurance of his favor should these views of God excite in your heart! O, could we feel but a thousandth part as much where eternity is concerned, as we do when health or comfort is at stake, how seriously and fervently should we inquire, and is God indeed my God? A single doubt would wring the heart with anguish, and uncertainty almost drive us to distraction. Pursue this blessing. If others are satisfied with a little religion, O imitate not such folly; but seek, in and by Jesus, the full assurance of faith. The power and justice of God are armed with ten thousand terrors against every one that is not his child; the love and goodness of God display ten thousand charms to every one that is. O how dreadful must it be to have him for a foe whose thunders, lightnings, earthquakes, tempests, and pestilences can sweep millions to the grave in a moment! whose command would extinguish the sun, and crush the universe to nothing! But how inexpressibly desirable is such a friend! a friend, whose knowledge no enemy can elude, whose power none can resist, whose wisdom none can baffle, and whose love none can comprehend. Who bids seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, revolve; who kindled up sun and stars; who rolls the moon and planets through the expanse of heaven, and pours floods of light and warmth from the sun upon this distant earth; who saith to the sea, "Peace, be still," and to the seraph in glory, "Go," and he goeth. While all the inanimate creation obey his voice, while angels bask in his smile,

while the treasures of heaven are at his disposal, while nothing exists of which he is not the rightful owner, and while devils are shrinking from his frown, and trembling beneath the chains of his wrath, O what is any thing to thee, compared to God!

You have to meet this infinite God. How will you meet him, if you have not become his friend, his child? How will your soul sustain that awful day? How bear the appalling survey of his infinite majesty? How will you shudder at the guilty past! How tremble at the amazing future! Prepare to meet thy God. Whatever engages you, let God engage your most fervent thoughts. Whatever claims your heart, let God have the first place there.

Much as earthly friendships and earthly cares may now agitate and engage you, remember they are but the things of a moment, compared with what shall be revealed hereafter. The time is coming, when those which appear of most importance to your present comfort, and which may now be contemplated with ardent interest, or inexpressible delight, will seem of no moment, any further than as they advance your preparation for eternal scenes. Keep this in mind, and strive to resign all your dearest interests into the hands of the All-wise; and seek your lasting good and best treasure in his love. He deserves your best affections, and your highest regard. How much should the earnestness generally felt after happiness in the present state, impress upon you the value of immortal blessedness! and how much should the anxiety you perhaps feel to secure the affections of kind and amiable friends here, urge upon you the necessity and im-

portance of possessing the love of the ever-gracious God, and adorable Redeemer, both here and hereafter! Compared with our God and Redeemer, what are our tenderest, best, and dearest friends? What even the kindest and most valued parents to us? Their warmest affection is cold as rocks of ice, compared with that which actuated the breast of the Eternal, when he so loved the world as to give Jesus for its ransom, or with that of the divine Immanuel, when he became for us a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The love of the fondest mortal friends is in a great degree but the return of affection; and such, too, is the love of man, of saints, of angels, to God. "We love him because he first loved us." The love of God was unsought, unsolicited; shown not to friends, but enemies; and shown when in our character there was every thing to prevent, and nothing to produce it. On our interest in this, an eternity is concerned; on our interest in the breasts of those we hold most dear on earth, nothing but an inch of time.

§ 8. Consider that not merely is the favor of God eternally important to you, but that he has an entire and unalienable claim on all you have and all you are. The first and the greatest commandment is, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength.* This commandment is binding upon all on earth, and all in heaven. The love it enjoins is the golden link that would bind the whole universe together in harmony and bliss. It would inspire all with one desire, and lead all to pursue one object, calculated supremely to glorify God, and to benefit man. The Gospel of

Jesus, while it delivers his followers from condemnation incurred by transgressing this law, takes not one jot or one tittle from our obligation to obey it; but strengthens that obligation by additional motives, and thus in fact establishes the law.

Such is the extreme deceitfulness of the human heart, that it may be useful more in detail to show what is required from those who are indeed devoted to God.

There can be no true devotedness to God till the corrupt selfishness of the human heart is subdued. Selfishness is the root of man's depravity. He is his own idol. He would give to himself that place which God alone has a right to possess. Some of our old writers called sin deicide; probably from the idea that man, pursuing his career of sin and self-exaltation, would, if he possessed sufficient power, not stop till he had thrust the Creator from his throne, and by destroying him, had assumed that honor to himself. This notion is correct. Were the sinner possessed of sufficient might when he had raised himself above all, except his God, he would esteem his God an enemy, and not be happy till he had advanced one step higher, and placed his throne above the throne of God. This is the tendency of the selfish depravity of the human heart, and were this corruption armed with equal power, this would be its end. When Alexander, having conquered one world, wept because he had not another to conquer, if he could have carried his victorious arms into the world unseen, and have waged war against his Maker, doubtless no place lower than his Creator's throne would have satisfied the infernal ambition that governed in his bosom. Every child of man

is born with this corrupt principle, though in some it afterwards appears much more prominent than in others. It is the root of human wickedness. Every human being, by having indulged it, has become an idolater, for he has preferred self to God; and given this that place in his affections which only God deserves and justly claims.

Ah! my friend, if pharisaic notions of the goodness of human nature charm your mind, you will think the writer a poor enthusiastic creature, almost beside himself, for penning assertions so strange. But if your heart has ever been broken up, if you have ever gained a glance at the great deep of iniquity within, though your life should have been fair and blameless, yet you will be ready to lie down in the dust of self-abasement, and to acknowledge, not as the extravagance of error, but as the correctness of truth, that

> "God only knows the utmost hell
> "Of the deceitful heart."

§ 9. All by nature are without love to God; alienated from him, and disposed to give to self the place he ought to have in their esteem. Where grace does not subdue this corrupt principle, and transform the man, this acts and governs in every station. The Indian Brahmin, who courts divine honors; the New Zealand chief, while esteemed a god by his fellow-savages, display its power. The soldier, the sailor, the tradesman, the man of science, the dissolute youth, and the giddy girl, are all under its influence. Ambition, in every form, is a desire of self-exaltation. Selfishness mounts the throne, when a desire to gratify the thirst of plea

sure, grandeur, and power, is the governing principle in a monarch's heart. Selfishness guides the general when spreading desolation through peaceful realms, that he may be extolled as a mighty conqueror. Selfishness rules the philosopher when pursuing his studies or forming his theories, that his name may be applauded through distant days. Selfishness governs the merchant and the tradesman when laboring for riches, that they or their children may be great upon the earth. Selfishness ascends the pulpit, when the preacher labors not to exalt the Lord, but to charm his hearers, and to advance his own reputation. Selfishness governs the dissolute youth, whose pursuit is worldly pleasure; and the giddy girl, whose object is the admiration of the vain flatterers around her, or whose ambition it is to be more admired than some rival trifler like herself. Selfishness descends to the lowest sphere, it governs even in a beggar's breast; and the lowly peasant, whose ambition rises no higher than to be the first man in his native village, is as much under its corrupt influence as a Napoleon, disturbing the peace and coveting the possession of a world. The principle is the same, the sphere of action makes the difference.

§ 10. When this corruption of human nature is not subdued, it creeps into every action, and pollutes all it touches. Generosity in relieving distress may spring from selfish motives, from a desire to be seen of men; but then, whatever benefit the relieved sufferer finds, the giver finds none; his charity is polluted by selfishness, and changed into sinful ostentation. Activity and zeal may spring from this wicked source, and their real motive be the desire of human applause

We even read of prayers offered to be seen of men; prayers that, springing from so polluted a source, must bring curses, not blessings, down on the heads of the pretended but wicked worshippers.

This is in fact the root of innumerable sins. It produces pride and ambition. Man exalts himself in his own esteem, and would fain be exalted higher. It is the source of avarice and worldly-mindedness. Man covets much for himself. It is the parent of resentment and envy. He is resentful, because self has received a real or fancied hurt; he is envious, because he would not have any rise higher or prosper more than himself. This makes man indifferent to his fellow-creatures' good. While self does not suffer, it is a trifle to him that others do. This evil root produces slothfulness and inactivity. Even some professors of religion sit down contented with enjoying the blessings of the Gospel, and careless of a perishing world; for *they* (at least they think so) feel no want. Selfishness produces deceit, and treachery, and dishonesty. These are pursued to advance its ends. Discontent is its offspring. From thinking highly of what himself is or deserves, man becomes dissatisfied with the conduct of his God towards him. Nay, murders, the single murders of villains, the *wholesale* murders committed by hostile nations, or by heroes, are to be ascribed to this. Had man been a stranger to this corruption, and loved his God and his fellow-creatures, the earth would never have been dyed with human blood.

Could this radical corruption of human nature enter heaven, even heaven would become a scene of discord

and confusion. Its inhabitants would each have an interest of his own, distinct from that of all around him, and opposed to the glory of God. God, instead of being universally loved and enthroned in every heart, would be comparatively disregarded; while each would exalt himself, at least in his own esteem and desires, to his Creator's place. Harmony and holiness would flee away; and the wicked scenes of earth be acted over again in heaven. Hence it is, that to prepare man for heaven, he *must be* born again.

It is an awful and alarming thought, that all short of the vital power of religion may exist where selfishness, instead of God, governs in the heart. Consider, therefore, what real religion demands, and inquire whether yours is such as leads you to devote yourself entirely, unreservedly, and eternally to God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ALL thy heart, and with ALL thy soul, and with ALL thy mind, and with ALL thy strength. This is the first and great commandment." "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

Behold what an unreserved surrender of yourself to God is here enjoined. Nothing less than consecrating to him all your powers, and all your faculties, all you have, and all you are. With your whole heart you are bound to love him. Our days are to be spent for him, our property considered as his. You are called upon to offer your body a living sacrifice to the Lord; to esteem yourself no more your own, but his; your feet to move at his bidding, your hands to labor for his

honor, your tongue to speak to his glory, and your body, with all its powers, to be holy and devoted to the Lord. So that, even in the common actions of life, God may be regarded and honored by you. Nor is this a mere matter of choice, which may be chosen as a higher good, but neglected without any considerable harm. It is the very object the Gospel is designed to promote. There is no piety without devotedness to God. All professions of religion, without this, are as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal—Nay, worse. The unconscious brass, when it emits a sound, is not false and hypocritical; but professions of religion, without devotedness to God, are glaring hypocrisy.

O, reader, is such the life you lead? Has God your heart? Can you, with the Psalmist, exclaim, my heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed?—fixed on thee, on Jesus, and on heaven; fixed on consecrating to thee my faculties and powers; and though my flesh and heart must fail, yet would I consecrate to thee all the nobler powers of my immortal mind, and in life and in death aspire to thee, my God, and my portion for ever.

The view thus offered of the nature and necessity of devotedness to God, is further confirmed and illustrated by those numerous passages which represent the Christian as a child of God. Surely from the children of such a Father, all this consecration of their whole selves to him is demanded. The affection of parents claims much, but the love of God claims more; and shall it be thought wicked ingratitude not to requite theirs with obedience and affection, and does not his demand much more devoted obedience, much more

fervent affection? How high, how noble a character is that of a child of God! Ask an angel what is his highest honor, his noblest joy, and he might reply, it is that I am a child of God. Is this yours also, and should not an angel's dispositions be cherished in your heart? How supreme is their devotedness to God! How fervent their love! How rapturous their delight! They have no will but his, no pleasure but in pleasing him. Why should they be more devoted to God than you! Are not you his child, his son, or daughter? they are no more. Are not you his child, ransomed by the blood of his Son? they are not so much. In this your nearness and dearness to him excels even theirs; and can you feel this, and not devote to him your body and your soul?

§ 11. True devotedness to God is connected with deep self-abasement and child-like affection. It is not the devotedness of a servant, who employs his powers for his master, merely on account of the wages he expects to earn; it is the devotedness of a ransomed criminal, who consecrates, to the friend that redeemed him, the life his kindness has prolonged. It is the devotedness of a penitent prodigal, when restored by undeserved compassion to his father's house and bosom. He serves God, not for the benefits he wishes to acquire, but for the mercies he has received.

Think of the case of a condemned criminal. Having violated his country's laws, he is justly doomed to death. His claim to life is forfeited. His interest in his property ceases. His connection with his friends terminates. His all is lost. Neither on liberty, nor possessions, nor friends, nor life has he a further claim.

He stands a wretched, insulated being, cut off from his connections with man, severed from all of which he was once a part, and unable to say of any thing that surrounds him, excepting misery, This is mine. Suppose some generous friend to pay a price sufficient for the ransom of this man: the sentence of death is reversed, he is restored to liberty, to friends, to possessions, to life. But if possessed of proper feeling, whose would these be? whose would he be? Could he say of these things, They are mine? Must he not say, They are his, and I am his, who ransomed me?

An anecdote related in the life of Doddridge, may afford an impressive illustration of this subject. A poor Irishman had been convicted at Northampton of murder, and in consequence was doomed to die. Doddridge visited him in prison, and becoming convinced of his innocence, exerted himself to procure a reprieve. These exertions were vain, the man suffered death, but that benevolent Christian observes, "Among other things, I remember he said, 'Every drop of my blood thanks you, for you have had compassion on every drop of it.' He wished he might, before he died, have leave to kneel at the threshold of my door, to pray for me and mine; which indeed he did on his knees, in the most earnest manner, as he was taken out to be executed. 'You,' said he, 'are my redeemer in one sense, (a poor impotent redeemer!) and you have a right to me. If I live, I am your property, and I will be a faithful subject.'

"May I not learn from it, gratitude to Him who hath redeemed and delivered me? How eagerly did he receive the news of a reprieve for a few days! How

tenderly did he express his gratitude; that he should be mine; that I might do what I pleased with him; that I had bought him—and the delight with which he should see and serve me; that he would come once a year from one end of the kingdom to the other, to see and thank me, and should be glad never to go out of my sight! O, why do not our hearts overflow with such sentiments on an occasion infinitely greater. We are all dead men. Execution would soon have been done upon us: but 'Christ has redeemed us to God by his blood.' We are not merely reprieved, but pardoned; not merely pardoned, but adopted; made heirs of eternal glory, and near the borders of it. In consequence of all this, we are not our own, but 'bought with a price. May we glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his!'"

Every child of God was once as surely a condemned wretch as was the poor Irish criminal. And condemned to a more direful death, the death that never dies. What then should be the language of the Christian, who views himself and his condition rightly? "Father, nothing that I have is mine; for I have forfeited all and lost myself. Behind me were years of sin, before me the gloom of eternal night. I lay a helpless, ruined wretch, justly condemned to death and hell; and as able to pluck the sun from the firmament, as to blot out my crimes, or to set aside the sentence of deserved condemnation. I had lost thy favor. I had no claim upon the smallest blessing; nothing was mine but guilt; nothing awaited me but perdition; without one gleam of hope, I was hastening to eternal night. Then didst thou interpose. Then did thy Son bleed

and atone for me; and now I live. Thou hast given me more than a reprieve, a gracious pardon. I live, pardoned and saved; but whose am I? not my own. The blood which ransomed me when I had lost my all, bought all I now possess and all I am. Thou art my Redeemer, and thou hast a right to me. Thou hast had compassion on my body and my soul. I am thy property, and while I live would live to thee."

How important is such a life! how different the views and feeling of a heart actuated by such principles from those they indulge who, having never known themselves utterly condemned, hope to please God by their defective morality! How different in its designs as well as in its governing principles! Let the mere moralist, or the fashionable worldly Christian, utter his sentiments, and he might say, "I trust the virtues of my character, and the goodness of my heart and actions will obtain me the favor of my Maker." Let him, who acts from the principles above displayed, explain the design of his obedience, and he would say, "I have no such expectation as my deluded fellow-sinner describes; I have deserved hell, and having deserved that direful doom, I know I cannot deserve heaven. All that I do, and all I ever can do, for God, (and I would do all I can,) is but a poor imperfect offering of gratitude and love to him for saving me. It is not a service by which I hope to earn his favor, but it is his rightful claim, because he, as it were, bought my body and my soul, when he redeemed me from the pit of destruction, by the blood of his Son.

A life of devotedness to God is not generally connected with retirement and withdrawment from the

duties of the present world. Some avocations, indeed, are of such a nature that religion absolutely forbids them; but with respect to those that are lawful and needful, the followers of Christ are directed to be "not slothful in business," as well as fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Religion does not set aside the common avocations of life, but, while it allows or enjoins the employments, it sanctifies the motives that are to govern in their performance, and says, Do this, not with the views of the thoughtless worldling, but do all to the glory of God. Let thy industry, let thy diligence, reflect honor on the Gospel, and furnish thee with additional means for promoting the honor of God. Seek health, that God may be glorified by thy improvement of its blessings. Labor for food, that God may be glorified in the life that food supports. Let holiness to the Lord be as much inscribed on all the engagements of life, as upon the hours devoted to religious acts.

§ 12. Another feature in a life of devotedness to God will be, a prevailing concern to pass life as in his sight. That we are so, all but atheists acknowledge, but most forget. That he is so, the Christian desires to remember, and more and more impressively to feel.

In public or in private, in blazing day, or midnight darkness, still acknowledge, Thou, O God, seest me. In the season of business, and in the hour of prayer, in the house of worship, or by your own fire-side, still God sees you. He hears every word, he observes every action, and watches every thought. Alas! how much practical atheism have even his children to deplore! for how much are these truths forgotten! He sees thee in the day of pain, and knows thy every secret sor-

row. He sees thee in thy cheerful hours, and knows how those hours are spent. Were an apostle or an angel always with you, how would you watch your actions and your words! but an infinitely greater is always near you! Were you to spend a few years immediately in the presence of God, how would you live? God is as intimately acquainted with you, and all you do, say, and think, and are, as he could possibly be then. Act therefore as in his sight. Often think, "Should I live as I do, if I saw my God? Should I do these actions, utter these words, should I indulge these thoughts, if I beheld him who now beholds me?"

Imitate the Lord Jesus Christ. In his holy life, devotedness to God shone with its brightest lustre. He represented it as his meat, his very support, to do his heavenly Father's will. When, after a fatiguing journey, his disciples entreated him to partake of refreshment, he replied, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of. My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." He labored and suffered for the honor of God. He ascribed to his heavenly Father his actions, his doctrines, and his success. He waited on him in his temple, or sought the solitude of deserts, to spend whole nights in fervent devotion. In life, he was all activity and zeal for his heavenly Father's honor; and in sufferings and death, all submission and resignation to his heavenly Father's will: and he left us his example, that we should follow his steps.

§ 13. Perhaps you think the devotedness to God, thus urged upon you, is far superior to that which numbers who profess religion manifest. Be it so. Numbers deceive themselves, and have a name to live while

they are dead. Numbers more of whose sincerity some hope may be entertained, yet, alas! give cause for many a fear that, when weighed in the balance, they will be found wanting. You would not wish at last to belong to either of these classes. You will wish for a religion that, when proved by death and eternity, shall appear of the right kind. Think not then that you are entreated to devote yourself too entirely to God. He claims you for his mercies' sake. "I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you present your body a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to him, which is your reasonable service." O think of those mercies! God made you what you are. You might have been a brute, but he has blessed you with a human form and an immortal soul. You enjoy the use of reason. It is his gift. You might have been an idiot or a maniac. Do you possess hearing, speech, sight? Can you taste, feel, smell? It is he who has blessed you with these powers; you might have been deaf, dumb, and blind, unable to smell, or feel, or taste. Perhaps you were born to the enjoyment of wealth; consider that, but for his goodness you might have been the child of a beggar. If not wealthy, you are probably placed in a situation which affords you many temporal comforts. He placed you there. You might have been an Arab, wandering and famishing in burning deserts; a Koon-kee, dwelling with the wild beasts, in dens or trees; a Bushman or a Hottentot, sunk almost to a level with the brute creation. You have had parents or friends, whose love cheered and blessed your early years. God gave them. You might have been born where heathenism destroys natural affection, and parents offer their chil-

dren to Moloch. God has been kind in fixing your lot; and has he not been as kind in the dealings of his providence? Of how many comforts has he been the giver! Through how many years has he been your preserver! Your body is formed like a delicate yet complicated machine, and one part disordered might have disorganized all the rest. Yet he has kept its parts in action, and preserved and regulated the whole.

> "Your life contains a thousand springs,
> "And dies if one be gone:
> "Strange, that a harp of thousand strings
> "Should keep in tune so long!"

Ah! it would not have kept in tune if he had not preserved the harmony. Survey your past years. They have been years of mercy. He has watched over you by day and by night. How many days of ease have you enjoyed! How many nights of security have you passed, when, sunk in sleep and insensibility, you had none to secure you but God! Have you enjoyed health? He gave it. Has sickness, if it visited you, yet made but a transient visit? He ordered its departure, raised you from the bed of pain, and brightened your pallid countenance with the returning bloom of health. Have you lived many years, and never, even for a day, been destitute of needful food and decent clothing? God has supplied these wants through all the days of those departed years. Have you, from the moment of your birth to this hour, had friends who have been the solace of your life? God gave those friends. Perhaps you have seen twenty, thirty, or more years roll away; can you say of one

day in all those years, That day God forgot me; that day I had nothing from his bounty? You know you cannot; though you doubtless can say, I forgot him for many long rebellious years. Through what changing scenes has he led you, and still been uniformly kind! and so kind, that neither ingratitude nor rebellion has ever checked the torrent of his mercies. He blessed you in childhood; he watched over you in youth; and if riper years have rolled over your head, he has crowned those years with all the mercies they have brought you. Through how many dangers has he led you! From how many storms has he sheltered you!

§ 14. Kind in providence, has he not been kinder still in grace? How much has God done to make you happy for ever! Compare your lot with the lot of millions; your holy light with their degrading darkness; your bright hopes with their mournful despair; the brightness of your day with the gloom of their sad night. If a Christian, "contrast your pure and peaceful Sabbaths with their unhallowed festivals of cruelty and superstition; your resources in sorrow, with all their unheeded sadness; your consolations in death, with all their dark and cheerless agonies; your assured prospects for eternity, with their cold and heart-sickening theories; and what a theme have you for gratitude! what an argument for praise!" Who hath made you to differ? Why were you not born in Dahomy, or Hindostan, or Ceylon, and trained to worship the tiger, or juggernaut, or devils? Some compute six hundred millions of pagans to exist on earth. You might have been one; but God fixed your lot

where the Gospel spreads a cheering day. There are perhaps one hundred millions of papists, the greater part of them as ignorant of religion as the heathen themselves. Why are you not one? Why were you not born where, instead of learning to adore God and the Lamb, you would have been taught to worship "silver saviors and saints of gold!" and, nursed in superstition and vice, have lived the slave of sin, believing that you could purchase of antichrist a pardon for your crimes? Have you a Bible? Millions never saw its holy pages. For perhaps a thousand millions of human beings, but twenty-five millions of Bibles are supposed to have been printed. Why have you that precious book? God bestowed it on you.

But I address you as a partaker of still greater mercies. Turn your eyes from earth to heaven. Think of God commending his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Think that he who kindled up the stars of light assumed your nature, and suffered in your stead! and O, what miracles of love have been manifested to you! Nor did they stop here. Did not God meet with you when you knew him not? Did he not enlighten your mind, that else had been for ever dark? did he not kindle in your heart desires that else you would never have felt? Did he not lead you to that Savior to whom else you had never gone? and when you feared rebuke, did he not forgive, receive, adopt, and save? What mercies are these!

Can you not exclaim, "I was lost, but am found; I was dead, but now, I hope, alive; I was a prodigal, but here I am in my Father's house!" Who sought, who

quickened, who gave you welcome there? God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved you. And look you not forward to a time, when you hope, in a heavenly home, to join the song of the ransomed, and to praise redeeming love for ever? And there will you not have to exclaim, What miracle of mercy brought me here? me, once so vain, so gay, so thoughtless of all real good—me, once so dissipated, so worldly—me, once stained with ten thousand sins—me, for whom the pit of destruction yawned, and whom devils expected as their prey! God, that awful venerable name! God brought me here; and never, never should I have seen this abode of peace, but for his saving love. O, my friend, are these rich mercies in possession, these richer in prospect, all the gift of that much injured, yet still benevolent Being—God? And can he expect, or can you be willing to offer, less in return than all you have and are! Is it much to devote that little to him who gives so much? Has he given you life and health, a thousand comforts, and more than doubled all in giving Christ, and will you not devote to him yourself and your all? Will he give you heaven, and is it much to devote to him a span of time on earth? O rather, pray, Merciful God! little, far too little, is the most I ever can devote to thee; and let me not make that little less, by offering a heart but half set on thee, and life but half devoted to thee! O rather, whatever other professors of thy Gospel do, enable me to offer to thee all I have, and all I am, an unworthy and insignificant, yet a living, and, through Jesus Christ, an acceptable sacrifice!

§ 15. As one motive more for devotedness to God,

remember that they who live most to God, live most to their own true welfare; and they who live to themselves, live to ruin. On this subject a pious writer observes:

"The fact is, no man will have been found too cunning for God. Men, all men, will be for ever and ever what they were through life. Not a grain of the seed sown in time, but what will bear in time and through eternity its own fruit. The tree which thou plantest, O immortal, of its fruit shalt thou partake for ever. By the merits of Christ believers will attain to life eternal, but the history of that life eternal will bear the motto, 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' A life of selfishness invariably ends in disappointment in some shape or other. There is an inseparable, an eternal connexion between actions and their fruit, and no wit or cunning of men can dissolve it. 'He that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly: and he that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully.' 'He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.'

"But he who has lived to himself, shall 'arise to shame and everlasting contempt.' I set before thee a heavenly life, a glorious career of Christian benevolence; and my grace should have been perfected in thy weakness. But thou preferredst a partial view of thy own interests, and thou livedst to thyself. Absorbed in secular engagements, thou raisedst a noble mansion; thou elevatedst thy family to the highest dignities, and the name of thy house has survived the ravages of centuries. But see, the world is on fire!

Behold, a new earth and a new heaven! What share hast thou in this new creation? Is there one soul on these thrones which thou hast instrumentally raised thither? Is there one scene to the beauties of which thou hast contributed? None. All thy labors, all thy projects, have perished in the great conflagration, and thou art left alone, since all earthly connexions are dissolved, for ever to reflect on the inexpressible folly and turpitude of a life which has been consumed on a base and fruitless effort to make self the object of adoration and service, while the Deity and all the creatures have been made to 'serve with thy sins.' Go, infatuated wretch, eternity is before thee—a god for a moment, a miserable reptile for ever. Hadst thou lived to me, I had made thee a son and an heir of God. Thou hast lived to thyself; thyself in ruins shall be to thee the only object of contemplation amidst the solitudes and unavailing anguish of eternity!"*

§ 16. While the goodness, and love, and compassion of God thus claim for him your supreme regard, the contemplation of his excellences should fill your soul with pure delight. If you are indeed a follower of the Lamb, then *this God is thy God for ever and ever; he will be* thy *guide even unto death.* Look at the creation, and you may exclaim, "My Father made it all." Look at the sun; it is darkness to his glory. Look at the world; it is the creature of a moment in his sight. He, before whom angels veil their faces; he, at whose frown the pillars of heaven tremble—he is thy God. He who inhabiteth eternity is thy God, and is for thee

*Ward.

preparing a mansion in his own abode. O think more of God, and less of the world; more of his favor, and less of earthly cares or troubles. What is the world to one who has to do with God? What are its pleasures or its pains to one who hopes ere long to be with God? What all the cares that agitate its followers, to one that knows he has but a moment here and eternity there? What is the world, what is thy country, what all thy friends to thee, compared with God? This world is not thy world. This country is not thy country. These friends, unless they too are the children of God, are not thy lasting friends; but heaven is thy country, and God is thy Friend and thy Father for ever.

And who is he that is thus engaged as thy friend? The God who is love. Love is his brightest glory. For scores of ages has he been showering down innumerable blessings on this ungrateful world; for he *is love.* The meanest insect is not beneath his care. A sparrow does not die without him, and the fowl of heaven are fed, because GOD IS LOVE. But in eternity the sun of his love sheds its brightest beams without one darkening cloud. Joy is diffused through all the immense regions of heaven, because GOD IS LOVE. Eternal day smiles on its peaceful mansions, for God is there, and GOD IS LOVE. Myriads of happy spirits exult there in unsullied holiness, unmingled happiness, and never-fading glory, for God is their friend, and GOD IS LOVE. He pours the tide of joy through their abodes, he lights up their eternal day: all they are, and all they have, all that heaven can furnish and eternal life bestow, all is the gift of

God, for GOD IS LOVE. And is this God, thy God! then rejoice. The Friend of angels is thy Friend and Father; and GOD IS LOVE TO THEE. What are all thy friends, and all their love, compared with his? His love that reaches through earth and heaven! His love that supplies a sparrow's wants, and crowns with glory every angel's head! His love that extends through time, and stretches to eternity! His love to thee, more boundless than that to the angels that bow at his feet! For, for thee, a rebel and a worm, he gave his Son. O wonder and adore! This God, thy God! O bow at his feet! Abhor thyself for having ever offended him, and triumph in his love. Father of heaven, art thou my Father, and shall I not delight in thee? Giver of eternal life, art thou my life, and shall I not live to thee? God of angels, art thou my God, and a kinder God to me than even to them, and shall I not love thee, and yield all my powers to thee, and wish to love thee with an angel's fire? Light of eternity, art thou my light, and shall I not listen to thee, and count all wisdom folly, but the wisdom of thy word? all learning ignorance, except the truth thy blessed book unfolds? Thou art love. O patient love! I have injured thee, yet thou art kind to me. How are my sins, even of a hellish dye! How have I acted the devil's part in sinning against infinite goodness! and grieving infinite love! Yes, my young friend, these mingled feelings of exulting joy in God, and deep self-detestation, well become us when viewing the love of God. Look but at his everlasting love, and there thou wilt find a sufficient portion to gladden all thy soul; and without a sigh, thou wilt leave riches, and honors, and

pleasures, and fame to their possessors, whilst thou canst say, GOD IS LOVE, and God is mine.

§ 17. Reflect further: He, thy God, is ever with thee. Friends may be absent, he is always near. He sees thy tears, he hears thy prayers, he beholds the pantings of thy heart and the desires of thy soul after more of his presence, his likeness, and his love. He is by when thou art praying in secret; and he goes with thee in thy lonely walks. He gives thee strength for the labors of the day; and watches over thee through the darkness of the night. Perhaps thy house is poor; the great ones of the earth might scorn to enter thy humble dwelling, or come under thy lowly roof, but thy God is there. Thy cottage is not too mean for him, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, there to dwell with thee. He is by when thou art meditating on his word, to pour the light of instruction on thy soul; to wing thy hopes, and fire thy heart, and raise thy desires to the mansions of eternal love. He is by when thou art conversing on his goodness; and hearkens and hears, *and a book of remembrance is written for those that fear the Lord and think upon his name.* Nor is he absent when thou art wishing that thy eyes were fountains of tears, to pour a ceaseless flood because thou lovest and servest him no better. Through all thy days of health, God is with thee; and when thou layest on thy sick-bed he will be near thee, and near thee in thy dying hour.

Perhaps thou art unknown and despised on earth, thy wisdom counted folly, thy name cast out with scorn; but while God is thy portion, what trifles are poverty, contempt and scorn! However lowly,

however despised on earth; as his child, thy name is written in the book of life, and stands enrolled in the records of heaven. While God is thine, though thou mayest have little here, thou hast much there. On earth but just an humble shelter, in which to lay thy head; but in heaven *an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that cannot fade away.* No riches here, but endless riches there; and it matters not if thou art poor on earth, whilst thou art rich in heaven.

Perhaps thou hast few friends, yet canst thou want a friend, while God is thy friend? He is more to thee than the whole universe; and his friendship of infinitely more value than that of all the inhabitants of earth or heaven besides. Thou art feeble as a moth, but *the eternal God is thy refuge*, the *everlasting arms* support thee. Thou art beset by foes and dangers, but the infinite God is thy shield; thou art a dying creature, but the immortal God is thy life and thy portion.

Perhaps God has given thee more of the comforts and mercies of this dying world; yet it is a dying world, and all is dying around thee. Rejoice, then, not in fading transitory things, but in thy God. God is thy God for ever, but nothing here is thine for ever. The tender parents, or beloved and loving friends, whose kindness and affection give life its chief charm, and gladden the very heart, are not in this shadowy world to be thy friends for ever. The bloom of youth, the strength of manhood, the vigor and joy of health, will not be thine for ever. The possessions and comforts of this life cannot long be thine. This is not the eternal world. All is shadow here, all is change and deception. Thy friends must quickly die, but thy

God will never die. *He inhabiteth eternity.* Thy health must be changed to sickness, thy ease to pain, thy life to death. Thy taper will expire; thy sun will set; all thou hast, rapacious death will tear away. Rejoice not then in dying things; but if God is thine, glory in thy God, who dwells above the reach of change; thy God, the everlasting solace of the immortal soul. And he thy friend, thy portion, through the span of life, will be thine through eternal years. The sun that cheers thee with its light and warmth, must shortly shine upon thy grave; but God, thy glory, will then shine with all the beams of heavenly love upon thy soul. That sun itself must ere long expire, but God shall be thy everlasting light. The world, on which thou art a pilgrim now, must perish like a bubble, that bursts and is forgotten; but God, who leads thee here, will be thy God in those brighter regions where dwell the nations of the saved.

There will he make thee rich, when all except his children are poor; and happy, when all but they are wretched. There will his love diffuse joy unutterable, far more exceeding and eternal, through thy soul. There, "violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

§ 18. The views the Scriptures afford you of God, should lead you to bind that volume to your heart. How different is the God of the Bible from that motley train of polluted idols which heathenism has produced! weak and feeble, vile and sinful gods. How different, too, is Jehovah from the idol which infidels, who admit any God, describe as God! A God who sees with unconcern the vicious conduct of men; a God divested of holiness, and justice, and his brightest attributes. Who, except men inspired by God, could represent him as he is described in the Scriptures? Whence, but from heaven, should Moses and the prophets, and the unlettered men of Galilee, obtain these views of divine majesty and glory which we have now contemplated? What but inspiration could teach them what the philosophers of all nations, and of all ages, never discovered? and so teach them, that all the philosophers of the world, with all their vaunted wisdom, are mere idiots in divine knowledge, if compared with many a poor child instructed from the sacred writings in a Sabbath school!

CHAPTER II.

ON THE NATURE AND LOVE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST; AND ON LOVE TO HIM.

§ 1. There are few more impressive proofs of human depravity, than the general indifference of mankind to subjects of everlasting moment; and the

contempt of the world for the happy few who are warmly devoted to the Savior. Zeal in other pursuits is admired, zeal for the Gospel is despised. Yet will real Christians triumph in their Redeemer's cross, and most admire and most love those grand glories of the Gospel, for attachment to which, the world most ridicules and despises them. No name is so dear to them as that name which shall endure for ever; no part of Christianity so prized as that which is to the Jew a stumbling-block, and to the wise of this world foolishness. The glowing fervors of a poet's language express the sober feeling of their hearts.

"Religion, thou the soul of happiness,
"And groaning Calvary, of thee! there shine
"The noblest truths; there strongest motives sting;
"There sacred violence assaults the soul;
"There nothing but compulsion is forborne.
"————Thou my all!"
"My theme! my inspiration! and my crown!
"My strength in age! my rise in low estate!
"My soul's ambition, pleasure, wealth! my world!
"My light in darkness! and my life in death!
"My boast through time! bliss through eternity!
"Eternity too short to speak thy praise,
"Or fathom thy profound of love to man!
"To man of men the meanest, ev'n to me!
"My sacrifice! my God! What things are these?
"Talk they of morals? O thou bleeding Love!
"Thou Maker of new morals to mankind!
"The grand morality is love to thee!"

Such regard to the Savior can exist only where exalted views are entertained of his person and offices.

§ 2. In taking a view of a few of the leading argu-

ments that prove that Jesus Christ is God over all, blessed for ever, we may observe that the Scriptures repeatedly assert that he is God, and give him the names and titles of God.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John, 1 : 1. That Jesus Christ is here spoken of is clear from a following verse. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." "They shall call his name Immanuel, that is, God with us." Jesus Christ therefore is God with us. "Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." Rom. 9 : 5.

The Father is represented as addressing Christ as God. "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Heb. 1 : 8. While the Father pronounces him God, God possessed of an everlasting dominion, shall we hesitate to acknowledge him di vine?

Christ is called the *true* God. "We are in him that is true, and in his Son Jesus Christ; this (or he) is the true God and eternal life." 1 John, 5 : 20. That the person here called the true God is Jesus Christ, is evident not merely from the natural import of the passage, but from chap. 1, ver. 2, of this epistle, where Christ is called "that eternal life that was with the Father, and was manifested to us."

Christ is called the *great* God, and the *mighty* God: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." Tit. 2 : 13. It is Christ, and not the Father, who will appear as the Judge of the world; consequently, as the appearing of Christ is that of the great God and our Sa-

vior, Jesus Christ is here declared to be the great God.

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, (or, The Father of the everlasting age,) The Prince of Peace." Isa. 9 : 6. These are titles which no mere mortal could sustain. Yet if Jesus were merely a man, there is no more reason for applying them to him, than to Moses or Elijah.

Christ is called the Lord, or Jehovah. This is God's incommunicable name. He says, "I am Jehovah ;* that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another." Isa. 42 : 8. This name, the peculiar title of the eternal God, is freely applied to Christ. "This is his name whereby he shall be called, the Lord (Jehovah) our righteousness."

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord (Jehovah,) make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Isa. 40 : 3. In each of the four Gospels it is asserted that the person here spoken of, as a voice crying in the wilderness, was John the Baptist. Since John came as a messenger, to prepare the way for Jesus Christ, he, in this celebrated prophecy, is called Jehovah. This view of the passage is further confirmed by the language of the angel Gabriel to Zacharias. "Many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God ; and he shall go before him (the Lord their God) in the spirit and power of Elias."

* The English reader of the Scriptures may observe, that when the word Jehovah occurs, and is translated the Lord, it is printed in small capitals.

That Jesus is called Jehovah is further evident from observing that the glory of the Lord (Jehovah,) which Isaiah saw, was the glory of Christ. "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord (Jehovah) sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims; and one cried to another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord (Jehovah) of hosts! the whole earth is full of his glory." Isa. 6 : 3. St. John refers to the 9th and 10th verses of this chapter, (John, 12 : 40,) and then, speaking of Christ, adds, *These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.* It was the glory of the Lord of hosts, and of no other person, which the prophet saw; and yet St. John says that he then saw the glory of Christ, and spake of him. Consequently Christ is the Lord (Jehovah) of hosts.

Thus, in the plain, unperverted language of Scripture, is Jesus Christ represented as God, as the true God, the great God, the mighty God, Jehovah; as God over all, blessed for ever; and even is addressed as God by the Father. If, as the Unitarians assert, Christ were no more than man, how dark, confused, and unintelligible would that holy volume appear! Instead of being a sure guide, none would be more uncertain. If Christ were but man, to worship him would be idolatry; yet millions of the best and wisest of mankind have been led to worship him by that very book, which says, "keep yourselves from idols." If Jesus Christ is not God, the sacred writers have deceived millions, who wished to know the divine will; have led them to pay divine honors to a man, or an angel; and thus drawn them into the enormous and ruinous

crime of idolatry. Can you believe a system true which evidently leads to this conclusion?

§ 3. That Jesus Christ is God, is further proved from his possessing those divine excellencies which dwell in no created nature. He is eternal. Of himself he says, "I am the first and the last:" "These things saith the first and the last, who was dead and is alive." These words contain "the strongest assertion that eternity past and to come belongs to himself. If he is the first, none can have been before him; if he is the last, none can be after him."* Were he the eldest and the greatest of created beings, he would not be the first, for God would have been before him.

If it were possible to render these passages more decisive, it might be done by comparing them with some others which speak of Jehovah. "Thus saith Jehovah, I am the first and I am the last, and besides me there is no God." "I am the first, I also am the last: mine hand also hath laid the foundations of the earth." That existence from eternity to eternity, which Jehovah claims to himself in these passages, Jesus claims in the former.

§ 4. Christ is God, for he is the Creator of all things. Let us survey this argument a little more fully. It may be stated thus:

The Scriptures represent creation as the work of God. The same holy volume declares that the creation was the work of the Lord Jesus. In effecting this work he did not act as an agent of the Father's. Therefore, as the Creator of all things, he is God over all, blessed for ever.

* Dwight.

The Scriptures represent the creation of the universe as the work of God; this is so generally allowed, that it may seem almost needless to refer to that sacred book in proof of the assertion. The Scriptures appropriate the work of creation to God, and exclude all others from any participation in the glory of having effected that work. "He that built all things is God." "O Jehovah, *thou* hast made heaven and earth." "Where wast thou when *I* laid the foundations of the earth?" "I am the Lord (Jehovah) that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens *alone*, that spreadeth abroad the earth *by myself*." "I have made the earth, and created man upon it; *I*, even *my hands*, have stretched out the heavens, and all their hosts have I commanded." Thus plainly does Jehovah assume to himself the glory of creating the universe, and deny the claim of every inferior being, how exalted soever, to any participation in the honor of that stupendous work.

We may next observe, that that holy book which, in terms so express, declares God to be author of the whole universe, in terms as express ascribes that work to Jesus Christ. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." Criticism has labored hard to wrest this passage from its obvious meaning, but, after all, it stands a steadfast witness to the fact, that Christ is the Creator of all things; strong as it appears in our translation, but still stronger in the original, "Without him was not made *a single thing* that was made." "By him were all things

created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." The language in this passage is peculiarly powerful. The leading idea, that all things owe their existence to Christ, is repeated twice over—by him were all things created—all things were created by him. It is also asserted that he existed before them all; and that his power keeps them all in being—by him all things consist.

It may properly be observed, that the language used here is altogether opposed to the idea of Jesus Christ's having acted as the Almighty's agent in producing the world; "He is before all things—Without him was not one single thing made." Can he be a creature who existed *before* all creatures? Can he have been made, without whom was not *one single thing made?*

The next testimony that shall be adduced is rendered remarkable by the circumstance of the very same words, which in the Old Testament ascribe creation to God, being used in the New Testament to attribute that work to Christ. "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."

The unavoidable conclusion is, that Jesus Christ is God over all. These statements respecting creation, if

Christ were a created being, would be perfectly contradictory; but explained by his own words, "I and my Father are one," they are perfectly true and consistent.

§ 5. It would occupy too much of this little volume to pursue the subject very diffusely; however, allow me to present a few more proofs, in a concise form, by placing in one column passages which undoubtedly refer to the infinite God; and in an opposite column, passages which ascribe the same perfections as Jehovah possesses to Jesus Christ.

OMNISCIENCE.

GOD.	CHRIST.
Thou, thou *only* knowest the hearts of all the children of men. 1 Kings, 8:39. The heart. "who can know it? I the Lord search the heart." Jer. 17:10.	I am HE who searcheth the reins and the hearts. Rev. 2:23.

These passages are peculiar. In one of them it is declared that God ONLY knows the heart. In the other, not merely that Christ searches the heart, but is he (the Divine Being) who searches the heart.

The Lord is a God of knowledge; by him are actions weighed. 1 Sam. 2:3. The Lord understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. 1 Chron. 28:9.	I know thy works. Rev. 2:2, &c. Jesus knew their thoughts.—Luke, 6:8 5.22. 9:47 Matt. 9:4. &c.

OMNIPRESENCE.

GOD.	CHRIST.
God is not far from every one of us, for in him we live, and move, and have our being. Acts, 17:27.	Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Matt. 18:20. Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Matt. 28 20.

IMMUTABILITY.

I am the Lord; I change not. Mal. 3:6.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Heb 13:8.

PRESERVATION OF THE UNIVERSE.

Thou Preserver of men; Thou preservest man and beast. Job, 7:20. Ps. 36:6. Ps. 145:20.

By Him (Christ) do all things consist. Col. 1:17.

THE END FOR WHICH ALL THINGS WERE CREATED.

The Lord hath made all things for himself. Prov. 16:4.

All things were created by him and for him. Col. 1·17.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNIVERSE.

God is the King of all the earth. Ps. 47:7.

The Lord is King for ever and ever. Ps. 10:16. The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. 1 Tim. 6:15.

He is Lord of all. Acts, 10:36.

He hath on his vesture a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Rev. 19:13-16. The Lamb; *He* is Lord of lords, and King of kings. Rev. 17:14

DIVINE WORSHIP.

Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Matt. 4:10.

Thou shalt worship no other God, for Jehovah is a jealous God. Exod. 34:14.

Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. Luke, 23:46.

Let all the angels of heaven worship him. Heb. 1:6.

All men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. John, 5:23.

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Acts, 7:59.

Stephen worshipped the Lord Jesus in his dying moments. Paul worshipped him. Christians are described as his worshippers. Saints and angels in heaven worship him. This worship is similar to that which they pay to God himself.

§ 6. Now, as if placed in the presence of God, let me call upon you to give a faithful verdict on this great question—Is the Lord Jesus Christ God over all;

or is he merely man? or, at most, an exalted creature? Can a man or an angel bear the exalted titles of God? God with us; God over all; the true God; the great God; the mighty God; Jehovah? Can a man or an angel be the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; the Creator of all things visible and invisible? Can such a being be the Searcher of hearts, present in all places at the same moment, wherever two or three are gathered in his name? and this to the end of the world? Can a man or an angel be the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? the Preserver and Sovereign of the universe? and the end for which all things were created? Could it be said of a man or an angel, that all should honor him as they honor the infinite God? that even all the angels of heaven should worship him?

In your progress through the world you may probably hear objections started to the all-important truth maintained in these pages. Bear in mind, however, that there is no truth against which cunning men cannot start puzzling objections. One plain assertion of God's, on subjects known to him, should do more to confirm your belief, than a thousand perplexing cavils to shake your confidence. Some bring forward objections against the being of God, others against the existence of matter; some will argue that you have no soul, others that you have no body. Perhaps the sophistry of their arguments may perplex you. Will you therefore believe them? Will you not rather scorn their fancied wisdom?

§ 7. That holy volume which thus clearly asserts the divinity of Jesus Christ, also declares that he was strictly and properly man. The Holy Spirit, speaking

by the apostle Paul, unites in one passage, Phil. 2: 6, 8, the two views, and in others speaks of the latter only. As man, he was born of a virgin; was the reputed son of a carpenter; was subject to his parents; increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with man; was himself a carpenter; was wearied; hungered; thirsted; wept; prayed; was poor and destitute; was rejected of men, and a man of sorrows; was in an agony; was betrayed, judged, condemned; was crucified; complained of his Father forsaking him; died and was buried.

How wonderful was the union thus subsisting between God and man! How was human nature exalted, when Christ appeared as God manifest in the flesh! But the subject grows in wonder as we advance. Jesus, in his exalted state, though God, still is asserted to wear the glorified human nature. This subject is referred to by the apostle, when referring to the Christian's future glory; "We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

The Lord himself also speaks of this subject: "I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." It is only as God that he could assert, "I am the first and the last." And it is only as man that he could declare, "I am he that liveth and was *dead*." The subject is wonderful, above the reach of our powers, but not of our praise.

§ 8 The Christian is represented as under the great-

est obligations to the adorable Savior, and as sensible of those obligations.

"While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." "Who gave himself for our sins, to deliver us from the present evil world." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come." "God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ; he hath made us accepted in the beloved. We have redemption through his blood; are made nigh by the blood of Christ; are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath, through him." "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever." "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

With what union of heart and voice do the disciples of Jesus thus express their obligations to him! The grateful acknowledgments of earth become the theme of heaven; the song of praise begun by men

below, is carried on by saints and angels in the realms above; and the Lamb that was slain is the boast and theme alike of earth and heaven. Christians are described not as anticipating, but as actually possessing blessings of inestimable value. And all this multitude of blessing flows from no superiority or virtue of theirs, nor from the mere mercy of their God, but all is enjoyed through the blessed Jesus. Are they reconciled to God? It is through his death. Have they peace with God? He made it through the blood of his cross. Have they redemption? It is through his blood. Are they delivered from this present evil world? He gave himself for their deliverance. Have they received the atonement? It is through the Lord Jesus. Are their sins forgiven? He is their propitiation. Are they delivered from the curse of the law? He was made a curse for them. Are they saved from the wrath to come? He died and delivered them. Are they rich? It is through his poverty. Are they accepted? It is in the Beloved. Are they complete? It is in him. Have they hope? Jesus Christ is their hope. Are they made divinely righteous? He was made a sin-offering to render them so. Are they made nigh to God? It is by the blood of Christ. Have they all spiritual blessings? They have them in him. His atoning blood has done so much for them as to justify the expression of a pious minister, "We are floating to heaven in the blood of the Deity."

§ 9. The subject of this chapter displays in the most amazing manner the love and condescension of the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle represents this love as incomprehensible; "that ye may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length,

and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." We have reason to believe the Savior's incarnation the most amazing event that ever happened, even in the records of eternity; and to believe that, through an eternity to come, it will never have an equal. Had Gabriel, from benevolence to insects, left the presence of God, to assume an insect's form, such condescension and love might have excited astonishment in every angel's breast; but with what astonishment must they have beheld the incarnation and the sufferings of Jesus!

They saw him the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. They worshipped him as the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. He had created the heavens and the earth, and upheld them in being for four thousand years. He had peopled earth with myriads of immortal beings, and he had filled heaven with ranks of glorified angels. Seraphim and cherubim, thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, owed to him their being, their dignity, and happiness. He had kindled up the seraph's fire, and arrayed with immortal youth, and beauty, and glory, every angel's form.

In heaven these immortal multitudes enjoyed happiness beneath his smile. Below, all things appeared supported by his hand, and governed by his power. All was harmony above, and all, excepting man, order and subjection below. Thus he reigned, blessing and blest: heaven his throne, the universe his kingdom. At length a time of inexpressible wonder and astonishment arrived. From the heights of eternal glory he descends. The infinite enjoyments of heaven he leaves; forsakes the bosom of the Father; quits the region of

eternal day; and, in a way surpassing all thought and investigation, this divine Person unites himself to human nature; so unites himself as to become literally man; and though rich, to become poor. And though *he thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, so connects himself with the nature of man, that *he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man*, proceeding in his career of humiliation, *he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* Phil. 2: 6–9. Thus, in one wondrous person God and man are united. When he had thus taken human nature, this divine Person spends more than thirty tedious years below. He is wearied with labor. The sun scorches him by day, and the cold chills him by night. Friends forsake him, and enemies murder him. He stoops to all. What a succession of wonders! What unequalled love! What condescension is here! And this displayed for creatures, meaner, compared with him, than a moth compared with an archangel! Creatures, whose destruction could not have taken one ray from the sun of his glory, nor one drop from the ocean of his joy. Creatures, whose very world he could have destroyed by a word, as easily as a moth is crushed by a human hand; and have banished them, and sin, and misery together, into everlasting nothingness and oblivion. But, with love unparalleled, he descends to this dark, polluted world; and lives and dies for deceived, guilty, and wretched man. O love divine! where are thy limits? Great God! beyond the sight of mortals and of angels! The stupendous sun, the brilliant moon, the amazing stars, the extended firma-

ment; these have their bounds, but that love has none. It extends

"Beyond the flaming bounds of space and time."

It reaches from

"The living throne, the sapphire blaze,
Where angels tremble as they gaze."

to man's humblest habitation.

Lift up your eyes and behold this vast world, the product of his power! See its continents and its oceans extending for thousands of miles; those continents may be measured, but not his love, who, though God, became man, to die for man. Sooner would those unfathomable oceans be fathomed than the depths of his compassion. Lift up your eyes to the heavens! Survey the countless glories of the starry firmament, all its fixed or "moving worlds of light!" Let your thoughts rove from star to star! How great is he who formed them all! How glorious he who has bid them shine with undiminished splendor through six thousand years! and to whom they are mean as a speck of flying dust! Yet he who hung out those brilliant fires stooped from his amazing heights of bliss and majesty to assume mortal flesh, and appear a feeble infant, and a suffering man. Far sooner should you measure their measurable distances, and count their countless numbers, than tell the vastness of his love, and the blessings it bestows.

The sun is darkness, compared with his superior glory who hung it in the heavens, and yet he humbled himself to the dark abodes of misery and death for guilty man. O! when you gaze upon the blue ex-

panse, or when the solemn stillness of night banishes from your mind the thoughts of a vain, departing world; when you behold the midnight sky, and mark the thousands of its glowing fires; then think, that he who fixed them there once hung on Calvary for you, that you might shine a star, a sun, in heaven, when all those stars shall shine no more. Think that he was once mean and dishonored, stained with blood, and blue with blows, that you might have a treasure greater than a thousand worlds united, and infinitely more lasting than the countless lights which illuminate the firmament. Amazing love!

But vain is language, and vain is thought, it cannot grasp this love, nor by all the powers of imagination reach it, much less by words express it! And vain is time. Its ages, were they as numerous as the drops of winter rain, would not suffice to unfold all the wonders of this mysterious wonder! nor to declare the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of this mysterious love! Were "all the love of all the men that ever were, or shall be on the earth, and all the love of all the angels in heaven, united in one heart, it would be a cold heart to that which was pierced with the soldier's spear."* Holy Jesus, thy creatures can but dishonor thy love, when speaking of it. But come, ingulf me in it! Come, overwhelm my sinking, rising soul, by the amazing view; at least so far overwhelm it, that I may speak, and think, and act, and live and love for thee!

§ 10. While the Scriptures represent the love of Christ and the obligations of the Christian as so great, they furnish an important view of the Christian cha-

* Maclaurin.

racter, by declaring that an intimate connection subsists between the eternal Savior and his blood-bought flock. To describe this union, ideas are borrowed from those unions in the present world that are of the most close and binding nature. Is the tie of marriage a strong, indissoluble tie? the believer is described as married to the Lord Jesus. Is the connection between parent and child most affectionate and lasting? the Christian is represented as the child of the Savior. Is the relation between brethren most dear and intimate? Jesus owns his followers as his brethren. Are the vine and its branches, the body and its members, but one? Jesus is the vine, and his disciples the branches; he is the head of the body, and his disciples the members. How dear, how close, how inestimable is that connection with the adorable Savior, which such language is used to describe! But on this occasion these passages are adduced chiefly as descriptive of the Christian character. In that view glance at them again. Does marriage express a union of affection and interests? the sincere Christian cherishes such affection, and esteems his Lord's interests as his own. Does a worthy child render filial love and dutiful obedience to a tender parent? they who know the Savior's grace render him such love and such obedience. Do brethren, united in heart, unite in pleasures and pursuits? the Christian, honored with the title of a brother of Christ, pants to resemble his exalted Lord. The branch is like the vine on which it grows. It possesses similar qualities, and, nourished by its connection with the tree, produces similar fruit. No poisonous qualities harbor in the branch, for none harbor in the vine. So, a likeness will and must exist between the Savior and his flock;

a likeness in disposition, in character, in conduct, in interest, and aim. Those deadly fruits of nature's tree, hatred and envy, malice and revenge, and furious rage and swelling pride, are not the fruits that branches of the living vine will bear; but fruits of gentleness and love, of humility and patience, of faith, and hope, and holiness. The same truth is forcibly inculcated in those passages which represent Christians as members of the body of Christ, as his flesh and bones. Does not one spirit actuate the body, and direct every member, and move every limb? Does not the same blood flow through the hand that flows through the foot? Does not the same principle that moves the finger, move the arm? Has not every member a similar feeling? Do not all display a similar nature? and have not all a similar interest? Is it thus with the body and the members? and must it not be thus with that spiritual body, of which Jesus is the head? All that are truly members of Christ feel the same principles within, and are anxious to display the same character without. The spirit that moves one, moves all. The life which animates one member, animates all. Jesus is the head of the body, and they are his flesh and his bones.

Perhaps in the present day there is nothing more common than self-deception, yet nothing more ruinous. How few imagine that they are not Christians? but how few bear the Christian character, as drawn by the hand of God! Setting aside the profane and the profligate, can we affirm of the generality of those that remain, that they resemble the picture of a Christian, which is exhibited in Scripture? Can it be said of them, that they seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness? that they are justified, are reconciled

to God, and have peace with him through the blood of his Son? Can it be said of them that their sins are forgiven them, and that they have redemption through the blood of Christ, and belong to the household of God? Can it be said of them, that as the faithful wife loves her husband, and esteems his interest hers, so they love the Savior, and esteem his interest theirs? Can it be said of them, that like affectionate children they obey the Lord, and like admiring brethren they imitate their endeared elder brother? Do they appear like branches of the living vine? displaying likeness to the holy Jesus, and manifesting those heaven-born graces which his Spirit infuses into every regenerate heart; those lovely fruits that branches of such a tree will bear? Do they appear members of Christ? So connected with him, so like him, that they may be termed even his flesh and bones? Are the desires and dispositions, the love and hatred, the joys and sorrows, the hopes, and fears, and feelings they cherish, so like his, that one spirit may be said to move, one life to animate them? This is the scriptural delineation of a Christian; is this theirs? How many of the moral and the amiable have not one feature of this portrait! Are not many, that even make a more decided profession of religion, utterly unlike the picture drawn in Scripture colors? Their careless lives, their worldly minds, their groveling hearts, their covetous hands, their slandering tongues, their formal prayers, their half-wasted Sabbaths, their proud resentful dispositions, their conformity to the vain world, make up a character as unlike the Scripture character of a Christian, as winter is unlike summer, or midnight darkness to

noonday splendor. Can these be disciples of Christ? As well might you expect the branches of a vine to produce only poisonous berries; as well might you expect to find a human body joined to a tiger's limbs. Do many that are called Christians bear those marks which make their final rejection sure? Then inquire what you are. Can you in solemn self-examination trace in yourself the growing, though too imperfect, features of the Christian's likeness? then do you feed on that immortal food, the bread of life; then do you pant after all the Savior's likeness; and thence go with renewed strength to imitate and serve him, through the rest of life's short and fleeting span. If this is the case, you may rejoice in those promises full of love, and life, and immortality, which glow in the sacred page; you may, you *should* believe, that having received Christ, he has received you.

§ 11. The love of Christ claims the return of fervent love, and a most important trait in the Christian character is, love to the Lord Jesus. The Lord himself asserts, that his friends possess this love. "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me." He declares that, without a high degree of this love, they are not worthy of him. The grand inquiry that he proposed to the apostle Peter after his fall, an inquiry thrice repeated, was, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" The Scriptures pronounce a divine blessing on all who possess this love, and denounce an awful curse on all that want it.

How vain is every hope, as to eternity, where this love is absent? *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maran-atha*, an accursed

creature, devoted to destruction. Had it been said, if any man hate the Lord Jesus, let him be anathema, millions that now fall under this awful anathema, would have pleaded that it did not refer to them. But the words are far more comprehensive. If ANY man LOVE NOT the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema. Though his character be ever so fair, his moral virtues ever so many, his knowledge ever so correct and extensive, his profession ever so shining, yet if he love not the Lord Jesus Christ, he falls under this anathema.

That love of the Lord Jesus which is thus required from every heir of heaven, is not love which can subsist in the soul, with love to the world and sin. It is love stronger than that which a child cherishes for a parent, or a parent for a child. The Lord Jesus solemnly declares, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." If there be one friend or object on earth as dear to you as the Savior, you have no proper sense of his worth; you have no interest in him.

The love the real Christian bears to Christ is love stronger than the love of life itself. The Son of God himself declares this, *He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.* To take the cross is not to subject ourselves to a few small inconveniences or sufferings for the Savior's sake; but it is to tread in the bleeding way to encounter mockery, insult, and cruelty, and at last to close the scene of sorrow by the slow tortures of a death full of shame and agony. The Christian may not actually be called to these sufferings yet he must possess that love for

Christ which would lead him, if he were supported by his Lord, to encounter them all, and to love the Savior more than ease and life. Our Lord speaks of this not as the honorable distinction of a few superior characters, but as that without which any one would be unworthy of him. *He*, whosover he be, *that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.*

The dying love of the Lord Jesus is esteemed by his disciples, vast as an immeasurable and fathomless ocean. He is indeed a friend for whom they will sacrifice every other. Thus the apostle acted: *I count all things loss, that I may win Christ.* Learning, friends, prospects for future life, ease, health, liberty, and life, all were sacrificed by him for Jesus' sake! When, expecting that he would make the last sacrifice, his friends wept around him, he calmly said, "What mean you to weep and break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus." Doubtless, multitudes besides have possessed a similar spirit. Many unknown, except in heaven, and others whose names are in the records of the church below. Luther, invited to Worms, and besought not to venture himself among the perfidious followers of antichrist, replied, "Since I am sent for, I am certainly determined to enter Worms in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, though I knew there were so many devils to resist me as there are tiles to cover the houses in Worms." A martyr said, "My wife and my children are so dearly beloved to me, that they cannot be bought from me for all the riches and possessions of the duke of Bavaria; but for the love of my Lord God, I will

willingly forsake them. Another sufferer, when asked if he loved not his wife and family, replied, "Yes: if the world were gold, and were mine to dispose of, I would give it to live with them, though it were but in prison; yet my soul and Christ are dearer to me than all."

Did these form too high an estimate of the Savior's worth? Were they willing to lose more than was needful for him? Ah no, my friend, without as high an estimate you cannot be his disciple. He himself has taught this important lesson: "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." You may not (and under our mild government most probably will not) be required to sacrifice friends, liberty, and life for adherence to Jesus, but in heart you must make the sacrifice. The Christian's situation is now very different from what it was in the days of a murderous Mary, and a treacherous persecuting Charles; but the Christian's spirit must be the same; the Christian's value for Christ must be the same. God must see you a martyr in heart, though you are not called to martyrdom. Nothing less than this can be meant by those solemn and decisive words, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." He may assume the Christian name, he may make the Christian profession, he may join the Christian church, he may indulge hopes of inheriting the Christian's happiness, but he is deceived; he cannot, till he sacrifices his all at the foot of the cross, be my disciple.

Is such your value for the Savior? Can you for his sake endure the frown of friends, the ridicule of former companions, the contempt of the great mass of man-

kind, and perhaps decided opposition or persecution in some of its many forms? Can you endure to become the drunkard's song, to deny yourself your wisdom, your companions, your pleasures, your profits, your ease, your character, your liberty, your life, and to sacrifice all that is dearest to your heart, for Jesus's sake? If he esteems you wise, care you not who deems you foolish? if he smiles, care you not who frowns? if he approves, is it to you a little matter who condemns? if he bless, is it to you comparatively a trifle, though all around you curse? It will be so, if you are counting all things loss for Jesus; if you are in heart forsaking all for his sake; if you have indeed that value for the Savior which his love and your wants require. Can you exclaim, Give me but a Savior, great God, I ask no more? Let me but win Jesus, and all I need is mine.

Were the adorable Savior to propose the question to you, that he proposed thrice to Peter, could you give a similar reply? were he to say, Lovest thou me? lovest thou me more than these? more than all the pursuits of life? more than parents or than children? more than life itself? Couldst thou reply, "Blessed Lord, thou knowest all things; I cannot deceive thee. I trust, Searcher of hearts! thou knowest that I love thee. I trust thou knowest, that though in myself the unworthiest of the most unworthy, yet that thy cross is my boast; thy heaven my hope; thy approbation my reward; thy love my ambition; thy will my rule. I trust thou knowest that I love thee more than these; if not with more of *the fire of my passions*, yet with a *stronger and more steady attachment*, an attachment stronger than my love of life. But, Lord, thou seest I would love thee more; for cold and weak is my love

to thee, compared with the infinite extent of thy dying love to me." The Christian may find unspeakable comfort, when conscious of being able to make such an appeal to Him who searcheth the heart, *Thou knowest that I love thee.* Amidst all my doubts and fears, my discouragements and perplexities, my unworthiness and corruption, amidst all I mourn, and all I pray deliverance from, still thou knowest that I love thee.

Is your religion a religion of this description? or is it that common delusive thing which makes few or no sacrifices for Christ, which trembles at the frown of a friend or the laugh of a scoffer, which adapts itself to the fashions of the age, which sins against God and duty if an ungodly employer command that sin, which lives in the sunshine, but dies in the storm? If this be the case, even now your hope and religion are but delusion: but let me hope better things of you. Yet of millions we cannot hope better. Look at that aged man; he reads his Bible, he goes to the house of God, no atrocious vices stain his life; but he is vain, impenitent, worldly: he stands on the brink of the grave, and yet, with all the eagerness of youth, is grasping a departed world. He thinks he is a Christian: but does he prefer the Savior to all beside? See that aged woman; the world is her portion; she grows fonder and fonder of it, more and more careful about it; as vain, as trifling as in her youngest years. Does she count all things lost for Christ? Behold that young man beginning life; moral and amiable, but putting off the concerns of the soul to future years. He enters the busy scenes of time with eagerness, but is careless of eternal scenes. His time is devoted to the shop, the counting-house, the study, or the farm. His conscience

sleeps, because no flagrant guilt alarms it. He assumes the Christian name, and goes on the Sabbath to the house of prayer; but does he count all things loss for Christ? Observe that young woman. Her deluded friends think her innocent and safe. She spends more time at her glass than with her God. She is more careful of the fashion of her dress, than of the conversion and salvation of her soul. Does she part with all for Christ? Alas! what myriads are there of such perhaps amiable and inoffensive persons, who, after all, are so far from being Christians, that, instead of sacrificing every thing for Christ, they part with nothing, and never denied themselves one vain delight, or resisted one temptation, from regard to him.

§ 12. Observe how this heavenly grace was exercised by that great and blessed man, the apostle *Paul*. He expressed it as his prayer, that *Christ* should *be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death*, and added, *For to me to live is Christ*. Self was subdued, and ruled no longer in his heart. While some live to pleasure, some to wealth, some to fame, all for which he lived was to bring honor to his Lord. To do this, whether weaving a tent or preaching the Gospel. This was his ruling passion, strong in life, and strong in death. Hence that prayer, that Christ might be magnified in his body, whether by his life or by his death. It was not his desire that Paul might be magnified, that his name might be honored far and wide, that ease and comfort, reputation or wealth, might be his portion, but that his Lord might be honored. Nor did he pray that Christ should be honored, merely by the labors and sufferings of a devoted life, but even by his death. Could he by labors and sufferings honor

his Lord, he was willing to live; could he by dying advance his Redeemer's glory, he was willing to die.

His sufferings were many, but the love of Christ constrained him to bear them all. He was in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft; in journeyings often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils by *his own* countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

A pious writer remarks, "Here is a man impelled by some extraordinary principle, sacrificing the honors which awaited him, his ease, and every earthly comfort, and voluntarily embracing, and persevering in, a life exposing him to stripes, to imprisonments, to perils by land and by sea, to incessant deprivations, to want, to persecutions and to death itself. What can constrain such a man to reject the intercessions of his friends who are entreating him to retire from these conflicts? What is it that impels him to reply, 'What mean you to weep and to break mine heart? for I am not only willing to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem.' What is it? 'If we be transported beyond ourselves, it is to God.' 'I am willing to die at Jerusalem,' but it is '*for the name of the Lord Jesus.*' It is the love of Christ that bears him away, and extinguishes every recollection of himself and of his own sufferings. This is the secret of the life of Paul; and this is the spring and source of all that is distinguished, all that interests us, in the life of Whitfield, of Brainerd, of Pearce, and of Martyn. In short, this is the source of every

thing great in Christian exertion; and where this is wanting, that place remains 'the region and shadow of death.'

"It is this principle which disarms death, and makes heaven itself desirable. Hence, while one of the martyrs was sealing his testimony with his blood in Smithfield, a voice was heard from amidst the flames, saying, 'None but Christ—none but Christ—none but Christ.' And hence the apostle says 'I desire to depart.' Ah! Paul, thou mayest well wish for rest: thy pilgrimage has been filled with thorns; many a weary step hast thou trod; many an hour of excessive labor hast thou endured; many a time hast thou been in perils, in prisons, in tumults, in hunger, in thirst. No wonder then that such a pilgrim wishes for repose, should desire to depart. But no—this is not his meaning, 'I desire to depart, that I may be with Christ.' Yes, this is what impels him heavenwards; this is the torrent that carries him irresistibly along to the bosom of the Savior."*

Referring to the life of the same apostle, another distinguished writer says, "We see him, in the prosecution of his purpose, traveling from country to country, enduring every species of hardship, encountering every extremity of danger, assaulted by the populace, punished by the magistrates, scourged, beat, stoned, left for dead; expecting wherever he came a renewal of the same treatment, and the same dangers, yet, when driven from one city, preaching in the next spending his whole time in the employment, sacrificing to it his pleasures, his ease, his safety; persisting in this course to old age, unaltered by the experience

* Ward.

of perverseness, ingratitude, prejudice, desertion; unsubdued by anxiety, want, labor, persecutions; unwearied by long confinement, undismayed by the prospect of death. Such was St. Paul."*

What made him such? The constraining love of Christ. What is necessary to make you in your station as zealous and pious as he? To know the love of Christ.

And why on his part this willingness, this desire, by life or death, to honor his Lord? Because he felt the Savior's love, and loved this gracious benefactor. Yet, was he more indebted than you or I? Had Jesus suffered more for Paul than for you? had he sacrificed more, or did he invite him to a happier heaven? Ah no, the blood which ransomed Paul was shed for you, and Jesus invites you to the same eternal realms of peace and life. O then, under equal obligations, pray and seek for equal love.

A few years ago died an aged Christian negro. She was often visited by some friends of religion. On one occasion she told them if it was the will of "Jesus Massa" to call her to-morrow, she would be satisfied to go; if it was his will to spare her some time longer, she should be satisfied to stay. She repeated, that she was waiting for her summons from above; said, God spared her a little, and she thanked him for it. By and by, when he saw his time, he would come, and then she would thank him for that.

The next evening she appeared faint and low, and said she was in pain from head to foot: "Jesus Massa" had sent the pain, and she thanked him for it. Some day when he saw good, he would come and take it away.

* Paley.

After lingering thus for some time, still in pain, but prayer and praise ever flowing from her lips, she drew near her end. When in her greatest extremities, she said her Savior would give her ease when he saw fit; and if he did not give it her now, he would give it her yonder, pointing upwards.

How similar the spirit of resignation to the Savior, displayed by this poor negro slave, and by the great apostle of the Gentiles.

§ 13. The Christian's love to the adorable Jesus is described as accompanied by sincere and unreserved devotedness to him. "None of us liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

Ransomed with the Savior's blood, the believer, amidst all his defects, lives to Christ; lives not to himself, but to the Lord, who died for him. The Christian is delivered from his vain conversation; becomes one of a peculiar people, who are zealous of good works; is not his own, but the Lord's; and for the sake of Jesus will labor without fainting, and suffer with patience. What has now been laid before you is represented as descriptive of that character in general, not merely in some elevated instances: there is nothing in this description of which grace will not make

you a partaker, if in sincerity you go to Christ, and follow him. It is true, this standard for the Christian character is much higher than that with which many professors of religion appear satisfied. But be not deceived. God's word is not changed. God's description of a Christian is not altered to adapt itself to their selfish dispositions and worldly minds. We have every reason to fear that Christ at last will say to myriads, that in this land of peace profess adherence to the Gospel, I never knew you, depart from me. He is no Christian who lives to himself; who does not act upon the principle, that he is the Lord's; who does not appear a peculiar person, zealous of good works. Let him plume himself on his conversion, or what he please, he is no Christian.

An expressive description of devotedness to Jesus is that in which the apostle describes his own. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Impressive statement! happy they who realize it all! I am crucified with Christ; dead, through his cross, to the world, it has no charms for me. Yet I live, freed from condemnation and death. I live the life of grace. Yet not I; no excellency, no natural power of mine produced this life, or gives it vigor. Not I; Christ liveth in me. He governs in my soul. He guides and regulates my actions. He gave me spiritual life, and his Spirit, dwelling in me, produces all the fruits of the life of grace. How happy a life! how holy must be its practice! how benevolent its tendency! how peaceful its end! But was it the life of an angel? No; of a man, and that man once one of the chief of sinners, but now made a child

of God by faith. O pant, and pray, and labor after such devotedness to Jesus Christ. You never will repent of being too much devoted to him, though millions have mourned being too little.

§ 14. After this brief delineation of some important parts of the Christian character, allow me affectionately to urge on you the grand inquiry, Do these things meet in mine? Am I washed from my sins in the blood of the Lamb, and justified by faith in the Son of God? Is my whole dependence on him? Do I count all things loss for him? Am I united to him in a bond as firm as that which binds husband and wife in lasting union? Do I discern a supreme glory in him, and cherish a supreme love for him? Is there no one thing on earth so prized by me as Christ crucified? The inquiry is needful, for many deceive themselves. All is not gold that glitters. Not all that appear penitent truly repent. Not all that profess faith truly believe. Not all that seem zealous for the Gospel feel its power. Not all that profess to be disciples of Jesus here, will dwell with Jesus above.

To avoid self-deception is so unspeakably momentous, that it may be useful to observe how far you might go, and yet have no saving faith in the Lord Jesus.

1. You may be free from gross and open sins, may be adorned with many moral virtues, may be chaste and dutiful, just and liberal, courteous and engaging, and yet be a stranger to saving faith in the Lord Jesus. All this was the young ruler, whose history is recorded by the evangelists; who was so moral and pleasing, that Jesus loved him, and yet so worldly that Jesus spoke of him as a perishing sinner, of whose conversion there was little hope.

2. You may, alarmed or instructed by the preaching of the Gospel, have forsaken some iniquities in which you once delighted, and yet be no Christian. So Herod acted. He listened for a while to the instructions of John the Baptist: and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. Yet Herod soon murdered the man he once respected, when requested by the profligate daughter of a revengeful harlot.

3. You may be a hearer of the Gospel, and with regularity, and yet be a stranger to all its blessings. Such hearers were the Jews at Capernaum; when the Lord himself preached, they crowded and thronged to excess the place where he uttered his divine lessons, yet were they so far from embracing the Gospel that he said, "Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell." "Many (he declares) are called, but few are chosen." Many will be rejected at last that may say to him, "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets."

4. You may be impressed and affected by the truths of the Gospel, and yet not be a disciple of the Lord Jesus. So Felix was. When Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled." The Lord describes one class of hearers of the Gospel, who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness, but yet have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time.

5. You may be a professor of the Gospel, and yet be no Christian; but destitute of every Gospel blessing: for you read of those who "profess that they know God, but in works deny him;" "who wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

6. You may pray formally and frequently, and yet offer no prayers that God will hear. So did the Pharisees of old; they made long prayers "in the synagogues and in the streets;" but it was that they might be admired by men, and in that admiration they had their reward.

7. You may be esteemed a Christian by others, and yet not be a Christian. Doubtless the apostles looked on Judas as a faithful brother. When told by their Lord, "One of you shall betray me;" each seemed to suspect himself, and said, "Lord, is it I?" but no one seems to have suspected Judas; yet he was the traitor.

8. You may deem yourself a Christian, and yet not be one; for some deceive themselves. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

9. You may *profess* to trust in Christ, and call him Lord, you may be even engaged in his service, and yet be no Christian. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

How many never advance as far as this, yet all this only would leave you as far short of heaven as even the careless profligate! It is needful then to inquire, whether you have gone much further? whether you have received Jesus with all your heart, to cleave to him in pain and in ease, in wealth and in poverty, in honor and in dishonor, in the sunshine and in the storm, in youth and in age, in life and in death, in time and in eternity?

§ 15. While the adorable Lord Jesus calls for this

consecration of yourself to him, does he demand too much? Can he demand too much?

Again, contemplate his love, and think how it was enhanced by the utter unworthiness of them for whom he died. For what a world did he suffer! a miserable world! yet in love with sin, the source of all its misery! A world in league with Satan, and in dreadful subjection to him! millions hardened in their crimes! millions more heedless in their folly! every heart by nature set against himself, and of not one of whom it could be said, This is not a child of sin and wrath! The busy wrapt up in care; the gay pursuing pleasure; the young charmed with a fading world; the aged still occupied in its pursuits; yet this active, busy, thoughtless world, all dead! all deserving of eternal death! and all under righteous condemnation to all its horrors! A world whose guilt no powers can measure; of whose ruin no heart can form a right conception; and whose wretchedness an inspired pen described in those two emphatic words, All dead! Such was the world he pitied. How could he pity it! Such was the world from whose polluted tribes he came to collect a colony for heaven. How could he stoop to accomplish this amazing work of love! He forsook riches, not like those of earth—vain, empty, transient—but riches of divine glory, divine blessedness, divine majesty. He becomes poor. A babe at Bethlehem, a man of sorrows through successive years, an agonizing sufferer in Gethsemane, a bleeding victim on Calvary. And this poor sufferer is God, made man, for man to die. Oh! how changed from what he was! How infinite the difference between the torturing cross and his eternal throne! between the thorny crown and the

many crowns of divine glory that rested on his head! between the murderer's cry, Crucify him, crucify him! and the seraph's worship, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory! During his transient abode on earth his love shone like a sun but without a setting beam. He dispensed blessings with a lavish hand for the body and the soul. He cured the diseased, and raised the dead; he taught the ignorant; he forgave the penitent; and bound up the broken heart. He cheered and comforted his friends, he wept and prayed for his enemies. He snatched from destruction the soul of a criminal dying by his side, and gave that ransomed penitent a place in paradise. And has the sun of his love ceased to shine? has the torrent of his mercies ceased to flow? Ah, no! the stream still flows with all its abundance. The sun still shines with all its glory. He has not become less loving since he returned to his eternal throne, to the bosom of his Father. Do you not say, My own experience proves he has not. How long did he bear with my unfruitfulness and neglect! how many invitations, rich in mercy, have I received from him! how many blessings has he showered on my unworthy head! His patient forbearance, his gracious invitations, his oft repeated calls, his unwillingness to be denied my heart and soul! His pardoning mercy, and the complete eternal salvation he bestows, all this displays his love, and makes it appear as vast and boundless as when he dwelt below. And when will that love cease? The narrow span of time cannot set limits to its riches; and the ample ages of eternity will never bring its end; he declares that he will display it there. by having his followers with him, and

by exalting them to honors inconceivable now. There he will give them eternal deliverance from labors, sins, and sorrows. There he will own them before his Father, and before an assembled world. And through eternal ages he will bless them with his presence, and enrich them with his love and care. "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." O boundless love! that before time began, pitied those that in time would be ruined and undone! Love, that reaches from God's high throne of eternal majesty, to earth's abyss of sin and wo! Love, that from this deep abyss raises countless myriads to glory, honor, and immortality! that will invest with an angel's eternal youth and splendor, millions, once the heirs of sin, decay, and death! that will bless with all an angel's happiness these millions, once born to mourn, once children of misery! O boundless love! that traveling through eternity, in the greatness of its strength, like the sun traveling as a giant through the heavens, shall make eternity itself one unclouded day of holiness and joy! O love of Jesus Christ! vain were the wish to measure thy heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths! What dost thou not demand?

This love demands little when it demands your all, and shall it not have that little? could you wish to be but half devoted to him, whose love to you is boundless and eternal? Whoever lingers in the Christian race, make it your study and your prayer to run with speed. Whoever is but half a Christian, make it your concern and supplication to yield to Christ your soul, your life, your heart, your all. Do you want more

motives to this? Contrast your present state, if you are indeed a Christian, with what it was. Once your sins unpardoned, like a mountain, were pressing your soul to perdition; now that load is all removed, and *your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.* Once you had no hope, no true peace, no solid comfort; now peace in believing, and hope of the glory of God, and peace with God, all are or may be yours. Once you were the enemy, now the child of God. Once the slave of Satan, now the friend of Christ. Once the heir of hell, but now of heaven. Once a fit companion for devils and the damned, now you have come to the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. Once all was dark and gloomy round you and before you, now all is bright and cheerful. Once this dream of life was your all, and death a curse, a foe, that would end your fleeting comforts, and consign you to eternal night; now life is a shadow, eternal life your portion, and death itself a friend that will conduct you to eternal day. And all this, and more than this, you enjoy through redeeming love. O what heart should not melt before such kindness? who that enjoys it should wish to offer to Jesus any thing less than all his heart, all he has, and all he is?

§ 16. When we connect with this subject the shortness of time, and the nearness of eternity, the considerations should unite to urge upon us the most heartfelt devotedness to our blessed Lord. It is but a little span of service, at the most, that you can present to that blessed Redeemer who suffered in your stead. Time is short. Much of your life is already gone. How many that read this page will never double the age

they have already reached! How many never see as many more years as they have already seen! What a scanty glance surveys our departed years! a still scantier might probably survey our time to come. One may say, I have seen fifteen years; and another, I have seen twenty; and another, I have seen thirty; and another, I have seen forty, and very, very likely shall never see as many more; and O, what a narrow span is this, to offer in gratitude to Him who will give me a life so lasting, that ages as numberless as the flakes of winter snow, and the drops of summer rain, were a moment, compared with its immense duration! A thousand lives spent in his service would be short. How much shorter is the poor remnant of one! Ah! can you too early devote yourself to this adorable Savior? can you too entirely be his to the last hour of life? O may it be your holy ambition to join with an apostle in declaring, *Whether we live, we live to the Lord, and whether we die, we die to the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.*

§ 17. Still indulge one reflection more. If Jesus is your glory and your boast, then indulge it to promote pity for others; but if you are not his humble disciple, indulge it that you may pity yourself.

How great is their guilt and folly who make light of such a Savior! What an assemblage of wonders does his love display! Yet these are the wonders that almost all the world neglect. O! my Redeemer, few are the followers thy dying love has gained! Few, alas! regard thy sufferings, and seek the heaven thou hast so dearly purchased for man. Ah! deceived, deceiving world! such hopes to renounce, such a Savior

again to crucify, for the sake of a few poor, short years of earthly vanity! Perhaps you, my youthful readers, are not clear from such frightful guilt. Perhaps you neglect that Savior who spread the heavens abroad, and who created the earth beneath you. Perhaps you indulge no thoughts of his love; or let any trifling folly drive such thoughts away. Perhaps you forget the eternal bliss of heaven, and the bitter agonies and bloody sufferings of the compassionate Savior; and forget all these for trifles so mean, that they would not drive from your thoughts one day of promised pleasure, and yet they can induce you to forget a gracious God, a crucified Savior, and an eternal world. Ah! foolish creature and unwise, thus to requite the Lord and giver of salvation! The cruelty to yourself of such neglect is as great as the ingratitude towards him. You, though young, and gay, and thoughtless, have a soul whose worth worlds cannot measure, whose price worlds cannot pay. You have been viewing the Redeemer's works, the earth, the sun, the stars of light, but your neglected soul in value outweighs them all. The period is coming, when of the sun, and all those meaner but brilliant fires, not one glittering fragment will remain; but never will that time arrive when your soul shall cease to live. Were one person to enjoy all the pleasure that has ever been enjoyed by all the millions that have ever lived, all that united would be but a moment of pleasure, compared with that enduring bliss which ransomed souls possess in the kingdom of God. And were all the sufferings that through almost six thousand years have imbittered so many lives, and broken so many hearts; were all the sickness and pains, and all

the dying pangs of the countless millions that death has swept away; were all these united and poured upon one unhappy head, it would be less than a drop, compared with those mountainous billows of misery which, in the world to come, will overwhelm every neglecter of the Son of God. These all would not form eternal sufferings, not amount to everlasting sorrow. These immense sums of happiness or of pain would have an end; but the joy or sorrow to which you are hastening can have none. How highly you value this fleeting life! How precious is even the uncertain prospect of a few years of peace and ease! How bitter are sufferings when no end of them can be seen! How bitter is it to the galley slave to think that the chain which binds him, binds him for life! How severe a sentence of perpetual imprisonment! Were such your circumstances, how insupportable would the load of misfortune appear! These chains for life! This imprisonment for life! What tenfold bitterness would the words, "for life," add to the prison and the chain! How great are sorrows when only death can end them! O, what will eternal sorrows be? sorrows to which no death can ever bring relief! O, what will be the wretched creature's lot who has through eternity to exclaim, "Mercy once wooed me, but mercy is gone for ever! God pitied me, but has now left me for ever! The Savior I slighted is departed for ever! for ever! O, that dreadful for ever! Peace, and hope, and comfort, all have left me for ever! and now this hellish prison is my abode for ever! This dismal gloom, this eternal heart-ache, this tormenting flame, are my sad portion for ever! O could that eternity be shortened! O could one hope

gleam across the eternal gloom! O could death, though at the distance of infinite years, appear to end my sorrows and my being! But no such comfort can visit me! There is no gleam of hope in the distance of eternal night. There is no death that can end my being. The death I suffer is the death that never dies. God and Christ, and hope, and mercy, and peace, and ease are all gone! wo! wo is me! gone for ever and for ever!"

Shall this be your lot! It must, it will, if you neglect that blessed Friend whose glory and love this chapter has faintly represented to you.

CHAPTER III.

THE PERSONALITY, DEITY, AND INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

§ 1. When the disciple of Jesus contemplates his Savior's dying love, the exalted allurements presented in the Gospel to a life of piety, and the eternal terrors denounced against a life of vice, he is ready to wonder that all are not Christians. But when he looks inward, and judging from his own heart, perceives what human nature is, he is perhaps as ready to wonder that Jesus has any followers in so dead a world. These views lead the mind to that Spirit of truth, who is the source of piety. To his agency the Christian acknowledges himself indebted for the religion he enjoys; and is encouraged and pleased by believing that his divine

Friend will do that for others which he has done for him.

It is of high importance to have scriptural views respecting the Holy Spirit; the agency, and the divinity, and even the personality of the Spirit of God, have been denied. He has been represented as an angel, but most commonly by those who have denied his divinity, as a mere attribute, the power or the wisdom of God.

§ 2. In briefly surveying the Scripture testimony respecting the Holy Spirit, first observe those passages in which his name stands united with the Father and the Son. "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." "The grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."

If the Holy Ghost were a mere divine attribute, and not a divine person, the former of these passages might be read, Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of holy power, or holy wisdom, or divine operation. This, instead of representing the Lord Jesus as having spoken sense and truth, would represent him as uttering language without a meaning. For what meaning could be attached to the expression of baptizing in the name of an attribute. If a person took an oath of allegiance to the king, the peers, and the commons, assembled in parliament, the meaning would be obvious; but if he swore allegiance to the king, the parliament, and the king's power, the latter part of the oath would convey no idea.

When the apostle implored for his Christian friends

the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, he implored most important blessings; and if the Holy Spirit is a divine person, not a less important one, when he added, the communion of the Holy Ghost. But if the Holy Ghost were a mere attribute, wisdom, or power, how absurd would appear a devout prayer, that the fellowship of God's power or wisdom might be with them!

§ 3. The actions and attributes ascribed to the Holy Spirit furnish further proof of his personality.

The Spirit is said to approve or be pleased. "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost."—*To be displeased or vexed.* "They rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God."—*To be resisted.* "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye."—*To strive.* "My Spirit shall not always strive with men."—*To hear and speak.* "He shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he hear, that shall he speak."—*To direct.* "The Spirit said to Philip, Go near, and join thyself to that chariot."—*To forbid.* "They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia."—*To guide.* "He will guide you into all truth."—*To inhabit as a temple.* "Ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." *To search and know.* "The Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God."—*To discover what he thus knows.* "He shall glorify me (Christ,) for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine, therefore said I that he shall take of mine and show it unto you." "The Comforter shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."—*To be sent for this purpose, and when sent, to*

testify, comfort, and convince. "When the Comforter is come, whom I will *send* unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall *testify* of me." "When he is come he will reprove (or convince) the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment."—*To inspire.* "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."—*To work and distribute according to his pleasure.* "All these *worketh* one and the same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he *will*."—*To give life.* "Quickened by the Spirit." *To be the object of attempted deception.* Peter said, "Ananias, Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?"

Is it possible reasonably to suppose, that in a volume written by inspired men, to instruct the illiterate, such language should be used respecting the wisdom or the power of God? Could it, to speak merely common sense, be said of wisdom, or power, or any other attribute, that it is pleased, is displeased, is vexed, is grieved, is resisted; that it strives, hears, speaks, directs, forbids, inhabits, searches, and knows, reveals, teaches, is sent, inspires, works, distributes according to its own will, quickens, and is the object of attempted deception. If sensible men would not use language so absurd, would inspired men use it when penning a book designed to enlighten, and guide, and save the world?

Would the pronoun HE be repeatedly applied, even by Christ himself, to the Spirit, if the Spirit were merely one of God's perfections? HE shall testify. I will send HIM. When HE is come, HE will reprove the world. HE, the Spirit of truth, HE will guide you into all truth. HE shall not speak of

HIMSELF, but whatsoever HE shall hear shall HE speak. HE will show you things to come. HE shall glorify me. HE shall receive of mine. Dividing according as HE will. Would there be any propriety in applying expressions like these to God's power or wisdom? Would even a child make use of them? Can we then suppose that he who spake as never man spake, should speak thus unintelligibly? Unitarians may talk about eastern allegories and personification, but we may defy them to produce an instance from the grave sedate language of a sensible man, of personification so absurd as the above would be if it were but the language of metaphor.

§ 4. The plain inference from these arguments is, that the Holy Spirit is not a mere attribute, but a person.* It remains to show that he is a divine person.

He is called God by Peter. "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." As lying to the Holy Ghost was lying unto God, the natural inference is, that the Holy Ghost is God.

The Holy Ghost is eternal. "Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself." None is eternal but God.

* On this expression it may be proper to observe, that it is used here on this awfully mysterious subject for want of a more suitable one. We do not mean, by the use of it, to assert such entire distinctness as subsists between two men or two angels, but such a distinction between the Spirit, and the Father, and the Son, as is sufficient, notwithstanding their union, to sanction assertions respecting one of them which cannot be made of another. Thus, for instance, in the economy of redemption, the Father *sent;* the Son *came.* The Son took human nature; the Father and the Spirit did not.

The Holy Ghost is omniscient. "The Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man that is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no one but the Spirit of God." Could this assertion be made of any created being? Of what creature could it be affirmed that he surveys the treasures of the infinite Mind, knows the inmost secrets of his Creator's breast, and searcheth even the deep things of God? Respecting God, it is said, "His thoughts are very deep." "His understanding is infinite." "There is no searching of his understanding." He is "the only wise God." These passages refute such a supposition as that the most exalted creature can search the depths of his Creator's wisdom. Could an archangel explore that wisdom, God would no longer be the ONLY WISE. His creature would be as wise as himself. He then who searches the deep things of God, must himself be God; as the spirit of man is an essential part of man.

§ 5. The part which the Holy Spirit acts in the economy of redemption further proves his divinity. If not God, he must be an angel. But what are angels? are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? The Holy Spirit's work is represented as of a far higher nature. Believers are "born of the Spirit." Are saved "by the renewing of the Holy Ghost." "Are sanctified by the Spirit of God." "Abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." "Have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost." "Are *led by the Spirit*, and shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." These things cannot be the effects of an angel's agency, for elsewhere it is declared that believers are

born of God, and that every good gift, and every perfect gift cometh from the Father of mercies. He therefore who is the distributer of these best gifts, must himself be God.

These blessings are too great to be communicated by any being who is not divine. Could the highest archangel be represented as the author of them? Could it without the utmost impiety be said that believers are born of Gabriel, are sanctified by Gabriel, abound in hope and love by Gabriel, are led by Gabriel, and shall of Gabriel reap life everlasting? Would not such assertions shock every pious feeling? Would it not be felt that such language exalted the creature to the Creator's place? Yet, unless the Spirit were one with God, it would be as improper to apply such expressions in reference to him as to an archangel.

§ 6. Finally, his divinity is proved from his being united with the Father and the Son in the baptismal form, and in the blessing implored for Christians. To unite a mere attribute with God in those solemn forms would be absurd; but impious to unite a creature, and pay him the same religious homage as his Creator.

§ 7. Besides the numerous passages that have been brought forward in proof of the deity of the Son and Spirit, the Scriptures abound with others, which admit of no reasonable interpretation if that doctrine be rejected. Of this description are the following: "And God said, Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness." After the fall of man the LORD GOD said, "Behold, the man is become *as one of us*, to know good and evil." Similar language is used on other occasions. The Lord said, "Let US go down." In the vision of the divine glory which Isaiah saw, Jehovah is describ-

ed as saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for US?" The language of the Most High on these occasions is correct and just, if the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one God; but if the doctrine of the Unitarians were true, the language would be unreasonable.

§ 8. The Christian is represented as unspeakably *indebted* to the Holy Spirit, whose benevolent agency is to him the source of unutterable good. When the subject is mentioned in a general way, the Holy Spirit's influence is described as of the utmost importance. When the sacred writers descend to particulars, and enumerate distinctly the various blessings bestowed by the Holy Spirit, they mention numerous most precious mercies.

The whole renewal of man is ascribed to his influence. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

The different parts of the new creation are traced to his agency. *He enlightens the mind.* "Thou gavest thy good Spirit to instruct them." "We have received the Spirit, which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." *Repentance is ascribed to divine influence.* "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his*

only *son.*" *To divine influence is faith also ascribed.* "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." *Hope and love are described as the product of the Spirit's power.* "That ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto us." "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son in your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." *The Spirit is further represented as the Author of holiness in its most extensive sense, including the mortification of sin, and exercise of Christian graces and duties.* "If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." That blessed Spirit who thus meetens for immortal life all who come to Jesus, is represented *as assisting them in prayer.* "We have access by one Spirit unto the Father." "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." *He helps them to persevere.* "That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." *To promote spiritual comfort also appears peculiarly his office.* The Lord Jesus said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever."

Besides other passages in which the work of the Holy Spirit is peculiarly mentioned, the Scriptures contain multitudes in which the necessity of divine influence is declared, or its benefits described in a more general way, as benefits bestowed by God. "We

are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." "God worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; the God of all grace make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." "The God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight.." "Without me ye can do nothing."

If a partaker of the Savior's love, surely you now acknowledge "by the grace of God I am what I am."

§ 9. The subject presents an important view of the *Christian character*. The representation given of the Christian as the temple of God, or of the Holy Spirit, is of a peculiarly pleasing, solemn, and awakening nature. The temple was a place solemnly set apart for God. It was devoted to the worship and service of God; was favored with his special presence; and, as far as any place on earth could be so, was described as his abode. How important therefore is this representation of a real Christian! the temple of God—redeemed from the world, and solemnly consecrated to the worship and service of the Most High—Holiness to the Lord inscribed upon this temple, and God, by his Spirit, there taking up his abode.

This is a description of the Christian character which cannot possibly comport with a life of worldliness, ambition, sensuality, or pride.

As reasonably and as truly might a temple of Dagon, or of Moloch, or of Juggernaut, be called a temple of Jehovah, as a mere nominal Christian be esteemed the temple of God's Holy Spirit. On the Christian's heart this view should have an impressive and awakening

tendency. "Am I the temple of God, and shall I not cherish those dispositions which he approves, and seek those graces that should dwell in his temple? Shall I not apply to him for aid, and strive with all my power to banish from this temple those polluting lusts that would fain intrude, and offend its blessed inhabitants? Should pride, or ambition, or selfishness, or covetousness, or malice, or envy, or rancor, or revenge, or love to the world, be cherished in my heart, I should then harbor in this temple the detestable brood of hell And am I indeed the temple of God? O what manner of person ought I to be, in all holy conversation and godliness!"

§ 10. Closely connected with this view of the Christian character, is the *test of self-examination* furnished by this subject. The Spirit of God operating on the heart, must produce a resemblance of the mind which was in Christ. Not indeed at once a perfect resemblance, but a resemblance progressively advancing nearer to perfection. The Spirit is declared to lead and guide the submissive soul; will he lead and guide in any path, except the path which Jesus trod? If the Spirit leads the soul, he will lead it to all the mind which was in Christ; and in the narrow path of watchful, humble holiness. The Spirit is declared to renew the mind. In whose image will he renew it, except the image of Christ? The God of truth declares, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Christ himself was a pattern of meekness and humility, of gentleness and love, of deadness to the world, of forgiveness to enemies, benevolence to friends, and devotedness to God. The Spirit of Christ will prompt the soul that feels his influence to follow

Christ; will renew the soul in the likeness of its Savior. How important a test for judging of our real character is thus set before us! Christ was humble. Do you indulge ruling pride? If so, you have not his Spirit, you are none of his. Christ was devoted to God. Are you careless of him? If so, you have not his Spirit, you are none of his. Christ in his temper displayed meekness, gentleness, and forbearance. Do haughtiness, and harshness, and violence reign in yours? If so, you have not his Spirit, you are none of his. Christ was forgiving to his enemies. Are you implacable and unforgiving to yours? If so, you have not his Spirit, you are none of his. Christ was dead to this world. Is it the object of your love, and the aim of your life? If so, you have not his Spirit, you are none of his. Christ was holy, harmless, and undefiled. Do you live the willing servant of any lust, the slave of any sin? If so, you have not his Spirit, you are none of his. But do you feel wrought in your soul a strong desire to grow like him? do you find a relish for spiritual objects, a devotedness to Christ? do you experience a prevalent concern to acquire his image? to be holy, humble, self-denying, meek and gentle, dead to the world and all its charms, alive to God, and bent on heaven? You may surely take encouragement from this, and view it as one of the clearest testimonies to your possession of the grace of God; for doubtless the reverse of the solemn declaration just mentioned is as true as that declaration itself: If any man have the Spirit of Christ, he is one of his.

§ 11. The promised aid of the Spirit furnishes an encouraging motive for aiming at *eminent holiness*. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trem-

bling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Were the Christian left to his own feeble powers, he might be disposed, at times, almost to sink beneath the load of life, and to consider exertion hopeless. But, God worketh in you—what now is wanted to insure the acquisition of every grace? God worketh in you, both to will and to do. He gives the holy desire. He gives ability to execute the desire, to do what the soul longs to perform. Could a promise like this be made in reference to much meaner objects than advancement towards heaven, how powerful would be its effect. Were it said to the pious husbandman, by a voice from heaven, "Till your fields with care, you shall not labor in vain, God works with you;" how zealous would be his labor! how rich a harvest would he anticipate! what an incitement would he feel to activity!

§ 12. The important discoveries which the Holy Scriptures make, respecting the blessed Spirit's agency, are connected with *cautions* or *directions* of the utmost moment to man's eternal welfare. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." "Be ye filled with the Spirit." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." As our obligations to the Holy Spirit are so immense; as advancement in the divine life, and growing meetness for heaven, depend upon his blessing, to slight or grieve him is unspeakably foolish and wicked. Can the lamp burn without oil to feed its flame? can the cold earth bloom with vernal beauty, without the sun to warm its frozen surface, and to call that beauty forth? can the stream flow whose fountain is dried up? can the limbs move, when the heart has

ceased to play? Yet as easily would the lamp burn without oil, the earth bloom without the enlivening sun, the stream flow without a fountain, and the limbs move when the heart is still in death, as a man shine in Christian graces without the sanctifying Spirit. Then prize the Spirit. Quench not the Spirit; resist not his gentle motions; stifle not his still small voice. Grieve not the Spirit. This admonition expresses the interest he takes in human welfare. Grieve him not by slighting his blessed influences. Grieve him not by undervaluing his aid. Grieve him not by allowing unclean imaginations and hateful passions to harbor in his temple. Grieve him not by lagging in the Christian course, when he prompts you to run the race that is set before you. Grieve him not by cherishing a slothful lukewarm mind, when he is exciting in your soul desires after fervent piety and distinguished usefulness. Perhaps the Scriptures contain no admonition more momentous than this, yet how is this forgotten! Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, and similar commandments, are frequently recollected; but, Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, is, by many that profess religion, an almost unregarded precept. As you wish to be prepared for eternal blessedness, let regard to this important rule govern your life. Often think, "Is there any thing in the dispositions I cherish, or the conduct I pursue, calculated to grieve the Spirit? or am I anxious to enjoy his blessed aid, and to be guided and led by the Spirit?"

To these admonitions the Lord Jesus Christ adds, what is in fact a direction to pray for the Spirit's aid, "I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek,

and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Encouraging consideration! such a Father will not refuse a blessing so precious!

While we are taught that the Spirit's influence is of so much consequence to our own comfort, holiness and happiness, we are reminded that it is of equal importance in our endeavors to benefit others. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

§ 13. An animating motive for *gratitude* is furnished by the subject of this chapter. Had a kind physician, at an immense expense, ransomed from the gallows a wretch condemned to die, and then cured him of a deadly plague that infused its poison through every vein, and threatened him with a dreadful and inevitable death, this man would lie under a vast and twofold obligation to his kind benefactor. Yet how insignificant would be these obligations compared with those under which every heir of heaven is brought. He, like this ruined but favored criminal, has enjoyed a double deliverance from death and ruin, from condemnation without and the plague of sin within. How divinely amiable does God appear as exhibited in the Scriptures, and how infinitely glorious a scheme is that for

human redemption! The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, conjointly the infinite and everlasting God, are all represented as acting their part in the wonderful scheme. The Father pities an undone world, and cherishes love so infinite, that he gives his beloved Son to be the sinner's sacrifice. He sends him into this world, by one dreadful offering of himself, to atone for sins unnumbered, and for guilt that deserved eternal wrath. The Son, acting his part in the wonderful plan of mercy, assumes human nature, and comes to be a willing victim. He dies, and accomplishes his Father's purposes and his own. The scheme of mercy has proceeded so far, that God can now be just, and criminal man be saved; sin be punished, and the sinner be forgiven; for the Son of God has atoned for sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. He rises from the dead, and his Father thus declares that justice has no more claim upon him. He rises to heaven, to pursue the work of mercy in which he labored while upon earth. But all the parts of this amazing scheme are not yet developed. The agency of the Spirit is now introduced to complete the wonderfully gracious plan. He enlightens the mind and subdues the soul, disposes it to adore the Father's love, to rest on the Son's sacrifice. He renews its dispositions, forms it to a meetness for heaven, and trains it up for that happy state. Thus God begins the scheme, God carries it forward, and God completes it. From first to last it is divine. It began in divine love, it ends in human happiness, promoting the divine glory. It began in heaven, was pursued on earth, and ends in heaven. It began in eternity, was carried on in time, and when completed extends its effects to all eternity. This transitory world is the

theatre on which the most wonderful part of this plan was acted; but it originated in the eternal world, and is completed there. Man, the object of this scheme of mercy, stands infinitely indebted to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Had the kindness of either been withheld, man would have been for ever undone. The atonement of the Son would not benefit the sinner, were the influence of the Spirit withheld; nor would the influences of the Spirit prepare him for heaven, were an interest in the atonement denied him; nor would either have been exerted for him, if the Father had not so loved the world as to give his only Son for human salvation. O, see God acting all through this scheme of mercy, and filling up the wondrous whole. See man, the object of the eternal Father's pity, of the Son's sufferings, and of the Spirit's influence. See every one that reaches the abodes of light, indebted, eternally indebted, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Among the nations of the saved, not one can or ever will be found not thus indebted. Not one of whom it can be said, He owes his happiness to other friends, or other sources; he owes salvation to the purity of his heart, to the vigor of his exertions, to the merit of his labors, or the severity of his sufferings. Among the countless myriads of the great multitude that no man can number, not one such will be found. The agency of God will be seen to have been exerted for them all; the Father to have loved them all; the Son to have atoned for them all; the Spirit to have renewed them all. The salvation of each, and all, will be seen as of God, from first to last. Thus, while God shines conspicuous through all the scheme of love, while God is seen beginning, pursuing, completing the wonderful plan, the

praise, the endless praise, will be the Lord's. Adore this mysterious love; admire this amazing plan of mercy; and pray to be the ineffably happy partaker of this unsearchable grace.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE A LIFE OF FAITH.

§ 1. It is said respecting the author of the Night Thoughts, that in his garden he had the painting of a seat, which, at a distance, appeared really a seat, but when the spectator drew near, he perceived the deception, and read the words,

> Invisibilia non decipiunt.
> The things unseen do not deceive.

How true! how important!

> "All, all on earth is shadow, all beyond is substance,
> "How solid all where change shall be no more!"

The Christian, while described as devoted to God, is represented as actuated by a principle which makes him *familiar* with things unseen, more familiar than with the things of time and sense. That principle is Faith.

Faith, in all cases, means confidence in the truth of certain propositions which are presented to the view of the mind. I am told there is such a country as India. The evidence of this proposition is such, as con-

vinces my mind of its truth. I believe, or I have faith in the statement. When convinced of this truth, I might be unwilling to take a voyage to India, but if willing to undertake it, should have no apprehension of finding that no such country existed. In this case, and many others, what is faith but confidence in the truth of certain propositions? Confidence, resting upon sufficient evidence. Less than this may be thinking a statement probable, but it is not believing. I may think it probable that a certain person will prove a kind friend, and this may influence my conduct, but I do not actually believe this, till the evidence convinces my mind that he is indeed a friend.

If the truths thus presented to my view are truths which immediately concern myself, belief in them produces correspondent emotions and conduct. I am told of some impending danger that threatens me with ruin. Belief in the statement excites concern, alarm, and endeavors to avoid the threatening evil. I am told of some important advantage offered to me. Belief in the statement leads me to embrace the offer, and seize the proffered good. If I merely think it probable that such danger threatens, or such good is offered, I cannot be said to believe either the one or the other. I think it likely, that is all; and the mere likelihood, though it may excite some degree of alarm or desire, will probably do nothing more.

Saving faith includes a confidence in the truth of those statements which the Gospel makes respecting the Lord Jesus Christ; and in other words, the mind is convinced of the certainty of the discoveries of the Scriptures respecting him and his salvation. That in this case, as well as where the subjects of time are

concerned, this confidence is a principal part of faith, is evident from the divine word. Rom. 4: 20–22. Heb. 11: 1, 13.

In saving faith, with this conviction of the truth of the great discoveries of the Gospel is united the cordial acquiescence of the heart in this way of salvation. The Scriptures declare that it is with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. When the believing patriarchs are represented as persuaded of the promises, it is added, *and embraced them.* Jesus Christ appears to represent coming to him as the same thing as believing on him, and believers on him are said to receive him. As the heart is represented as the seat of the affections, to believe with the heart, suggests not merely the idea of confidence in a truth proposed, or a friend revealed, but the cordial affectionate reception of that truth. And such is the case with every believer in the Son of God. Am I convinced that sin has undone me? Am I anxious for that salvation which I feel to be beyond the attainment of human efforts? While in this state of mind, am I convinced that it is indeed a faithful saying, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners? This is a declaration full of comfort. I feel it to be suited to my condition. I perceive the Son of God to be such a Savior as my wants require. My heart welcomes this Savior, and cordially acquiesces in this scheme of mercy; I rest on his promise, and intrust my all for eternity to his care. Now I can say, "Lord, I believe."

Let it not be imagined that the view now given of saving faith would insinuate that God is not its giver. He is strictly its author, as he enlightens the mind, and disposes it to form a correct judgment respecting

the certainty of Gospel truths, and as he disposes the heart to acquiesce in the Gospel scheme of salvation, and leads the penitent to commit his eternal all to the Lamb that was slain.

§ 2. The Christian *lives by faith*, as by faith in the Son of God he is delivered from condemnation, and made the heir of eternal life, and as faith directs his conduct and governs his life.

While believers are thus represented as forgiven, justified, and accepted with God, through faith, the Scriptures explicitly declare that this is not in consequence of some virtue existing in faith itself, but in consequence of what the Son of God has done and suffered, whose people they become by faith. Before they believe they are ungodly, and after they believe are still unworthy!

The atonement of the blessed Jesus is that on which justifying faith more especially fixes. Hence it is described as FAITH IN HIS BLOOD. The expression is remarkable. It is not faith in his divine commission, faith in his rich benevolence, faith in his gracious promises, faith in his lovely character, but FAITH IN HIS BLOOD. And as a propitiation for sin it is, by faith in his blood, that the soul enjoys the benefits he bestows. The Socinian has faith in his divine commission: what will it avail him? the Mahomedan has the same. The humble disciple has faith in his blood. The importance of a faith which thus fixes on the atoning death of the Savior, appears inculcated by himself, in the most solemn manner, when he, in a figurative discourse, represented his flesh and blood as the meat and drink of his disciples.

§ 3. The *nature of faith* is illustrated in the word of

God by a reference to its effects. It is represented as a strong confidence in the truth of divine declarations or promises; a confidence doubtless resting on the divine character, and so strong as to lead its possessors cheerfully to follow wherever God directed them to go, and cheerfully to perform whatever God directed them to do. Faith influenced Noah. Perhaps a century before the deluge God announced that tremendous judgment, and commanded him to build the ark. At that time, and probably for many succeeding years, no indications of the flood were seen. Seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, pursued their usual course. Sun and moon, and all the heavenly bodies, moved in their accustomed order. But God had spoken, and assured of God's faithfulness and veracity, Noah prepared for the dreadful day, which he was sure would come. He built the ark—the day of destruction arrived—but he was safe. Of Abraham, the father of the faithful, it is added, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." "He knew not whether the people would be friends or enemies, kind or cruel." Whether sorrow or comfort awaited him in that strange land. But assured of the wisdom and goodness of God, he confided fully in the promise that God made him. God had commanded him to forsake his country. This was sufficient. Wherever he might roam, God would be his guide. This was enough to render him safe and happy.

§ 4. In the account given by the word of God respecting faith, it is represented as producing effects

similar to those which sight would produce. What sight is with respect to this world, faith is with respect to the next.

As faith in regard to eternal things, is similar to sight with respect to those of time, so it produces effects exactly similar. Were the Christian to see the Son of God expiring for his sins, what more could sight effect, than to lead him to abhor himself, to hate his sins, and to yield himself a living sacrifice to his crucified Lord? All this faith effects, wherever it is genuine. Were the glories of eternity unveiled to the believer's eye, and the bliss of heaven presented to his sight, what more could the sight effect, than lead the soul to seek its portion above, to slight the trifles of time, and feel and act as a pilgrim upon earth? Where faith is possessed, all this will be effected; not with feelings as lively, or perceptions as vivid, as those produced by sight, but the choice will be as real, and the affections as truly turned to heaven, and fixed and centering there.

Were the scenes of eternal judgment, or the dark prison of eternal misery, presented to the Christian's sight, what could it effect more than lead him earnestly to flee from the wrath to come, and to prepare to render his last account? And this, too, faith effects on all that feel its saving power.

Were a dying Savior, a blissful heaven, the awful judgment-throne, and a miserable hell, presented *together* to the Christian's view, what more could the sight effect, than lead him so earnestly to flee the dreaded evil, so devoutly to seize the proffered good, that, compared with this, health, and liberty, and friends, and life should seem things of no account in

his esteem? Could sight do more than lead him to resign all these, and to choose pain, and bonds, and death, so that he might but win Christ and heaven? All this faith has done; and done not only in one solitary instance, but in millions of instances. It has been supposed that since Christianity arose, not less than fifty millions of martyrs have laid down their lives for its sake. Thus, even when sufferings or death are in the way, faith still leads the true Christian forward. It is an unseen heaven that he seeks, an unseen hell that he dreads, an unseen God that he loves, and an unseen Savior to whom he resigns himself. Yet, while all that in his esteem is most dreadful, or most alluring, is unseen, he avoids or pursues these unseen things with a resolution as strong, and a heart as decided, as that of the most inveterate worldling, who is pursuing the visible objects of earth and time. It may rather be said, with a stronger resolution and a firmer decision. For let almost certain death stand between the worldling and his object, and he shrinks from the pursuit; but he whose faith is genuine, strengthened from above, will not shrink from the pursuit of Christ and heaven, though painful bonds, or certain death obstruct his way.

In the illustrations of the effects of faith, which have already been adduced from the word of God, it is plain that its effects were such as sight would have produced. Had Noah seen the deluge, could he have done more than build the ark? Had Abraham seen the country to which God would lead him, and beheld even a thousand attractions, could he have yielded a more ready obedience to the divine command?

In the case of Moses, what could sight have done

which faith did not effect? Could he have suffered with more resolution? could he have chosen God as his portion with more decision? could he have sought eternal rest with more patient perseverance? He suffered, he acted, he endured, as seeing him who is invisible, and seeing the things that are unseen.

The same were the effects of faith on the holy host of confessors, who were tortured, were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; who wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy.

Surely the faith of these sufferers accomplished all that could have been accomplished if they beheld their "God in glory," and their wished-for home. Could they, who died martyrs that they might obtain a better resurrection, have done more than die, if all the solemn and triumphant scenes of that resurrection had been exhibited to their view? Could they who met death in a hundred horrid forms, or wandered in the dens of wild beasts, more desolate than they—could they have endured more constantly if the world they sought had been continually before their eyes? Faith was indeed to all these the substance of things hoped for. They all endured as seeing things invisible.

In accordance with this view of the effects of faith, the Christian is described as walking by faith. "We walk by faith, not by sight." The idea suggested appears to be, that the Christian pilgrim pursues his journey to eternity with his heart, and soul, and affections, and actions, directed by those solemn objects which are as yet unseen. He goes forward step by step, influenced solely in his choice, and heart, and

conduct, not by the visible objects which charm the deluded eyes of worldly men, but by the invisible realities of an everlasting state.

According to Scripture representations, *Faith overcomes the world.—Faith produces love.—Faith insures holy obedience.—Faith promotes inward purity as well as outward obedience.—Faith is a source of peace and comfort.—Faith gives energy to patience, and promotes perseverance.* Faith is a shield. The warrior's shield protected his body, and warded off the thrusts and blows of his enemy; so faith protects the Christian warrior. It is a breast-plate. The breast-plate, as the word suggests, was designed to guard the breast, and thus protect the vital parts, and especially the heart. This is the place of faith, and while faith is possessed, the heart will be engaged for God, its affections will still turn to him, and the humble believer, safe in this impenetrable breast-plate, will be kept by the power of God, through faith, to final victory and full salvation.—*Faith produces spirituality of mind and affection.—Faith can be exhibited only by its fruits.* "Show me thy faith without thy works." Do it if thou canst. It is beyond thy power to do so.—*Faith cannot live without being productive of the fruits thus described.* This is evident from the fact, that in the most solemn manner the Son of God declares that those only shall enter heaven who do his Father's will, and yet that with equal certainty salvation is promised to every believer. The inference is clear; every believer will do the will and hearken to the precepts of God.

Need we wonder that the faith which produces such effects, and with which the most valuable blessings are

connected, is described as precious faith; and have we not reason to unite in the frequent prayer of the apostles, "Lord, increase our faith!"

§ 5. Are you a believer? You have borne the name of Christian; but most who bear that sacred and abused name are practical unbelievers. If you have been one of the careless and the formal, permit me to ask, should you fear a threatening dagger? should you dread to swallow a bowl of poison? You know you would; but why? Have you ever felt the miseries inflicted by a dagger or by poison? You have not. Why then would you fear them? Because you believe, on the testimony of others, the dreadful effects of daggers and of poisons. You avoid them, through faith. A greater than mortals, a greater than angels, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, declares that you are a lost creature, and tells you of scenes of misery to which sin leads, more dreadful than the most dreadful here—of a world where eternal horror reigns; where miseries beyond description dwell; where, could they inflict a second death, daggers and poisons would be blessings indeed—blessings fought for more earnestly than crowns on earth! He tells you of an eternal hell, which sin has merited, and to which sin is sinking you; and do you believe? O! if you did, you would flee from the wrath to come.

A friend tells you of some important good that you may obtain; you follow it. Of some pleasures you may enjoy; you pursue them. Why? because you believe his word, and believe they will increase your satisfaction. Perhaps you are ill. An acquaintance tells you of a medicine that is an infallible antidote to your disorder: you take it. Why? have you ever

tried its virtues? No: but you believe him who has. In all these cases you are a believer, and faith leads you to pursue desired good.

God tells you in his word, that, pitying your misery and concerned for your happiness, he gave his best Beloved to suffer in your place. This divine friend calls you to follow him, and assures you that eternal life is the heritage of his discipies. The joys of earth are only like gliding shadows or departing dreams of joy. Heaven alone possesses the fair reality. Every thing fades here; nothing fades there. Here time is short; but there, eternity how long! Yet in this moment must that eternity of bliss be gained, or never be obtained. Now would the Savior make you an heir of heaven; but beyond the grave he will never extend to you a pitying, helping hand. All this he declares to you in his word. You profess, perhaps, to believe it all, and, O dreadful! you slight it all. Do you believe him? What infatuation! what want of common sense to suppose you do! No! if you did, you would flee to the shelter of his cross, and find salvation there. No! if you did believe him, you would not prefer earth to heaven, and a moment to eternity. No! if you did believe him, you would not continue dying of sin, and careless of the great Physician. And while you neglect him, what are you but a practical infidel? You may talk of eternity and prefer time before it, but not believe in eternal life, as the gift of God through Jesus Christ, and think of eternal life, without feeling that time is a dream, and life a vapor. If this earth could be hung on one side of a balance, and a speck of dust be laid in the other scale, would the dust weigh down the world? Sooner would it do so, than time be pre-

ferred to eternity by him who cordially believes what the blessed Scriptures say about his wretchedness, and his only remedy!

Ah! what solemn scenes will soon open upon you; an endless world and all its endless joys or woes; the mighty Redeemer and the eternal God. Were there only a probability of that solemn world, it might be sufficient to make a reasonable creature indifferent to one so transitory and perishing as this; but here it is not bare probability, it is certainty; and yet will you grasp at the passing shadows of this world, and neglect the endless realities of the other! Now you say of a part of life, it is gone; yet you look forward and hope for other years to come; but what will be your state when looking backward? you must say, Time is gone; and looking forward, Eternity is come. O that awful, that dreadful eternity! How will it torment the murderers of time! how will it teach the thoughtless sinner, and the mere nominal Christian, their folly and their madness. In this world, the most wretched may look for ease from earthly misery in the hallowed rest of the grave; there, they may say, the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. But when they enter that neglected eternity, O, what a change will there be in this respect! As there no death alarms the happy, so no death relieves the miserable. On earth, sleep may afford the most miserable intervals of ease; but there will be no sleeping in hell. The sufferer on the bed of distraction and pain often finds relief in the power of laudanum and opiates. O how often, when sitting by such a bed, have I thought, there will be no laudanum in the world of wretched spirits! no medicines there to assuage the force of

pain, or render the sufferer insensible of his state! All this, too, deserved by sin. And do you profess to believe the book which warns you of such danger, and shows you how to escape? and yet do you slight that salvation? O what heads, what hearts have they who, professing to believe these things, can trifle life away! You would start with horror at a proposition to murder yourself; can you, without hesitation, do ten times worse than murder your immortal soul? by a careless, ungodly life train it for destruction; fit it for hell; make it the eternal enemy of God; prepare it to be a suitable companion for devils; and eternally subject it to Satan's power! If you were in a room surrounded with armed enemies, and one were to enter with two lists in his hand, in one or the other of which the name of every person present would be found; if all in one list were devoted to death, consigned to the bayonets of the surrounding soldiers, and all in the other list sure of life and joy, how anxious would you be to know in which list your name stood! especially if the dead list were the more numerous of the two! Yet here all your anxiety would be concerning a life that must soon end by disease, if saved from violence. But eternal life or eternal death is before you; and do you never think it worth while to inquire, Is my name written in the book of life? am I a candidate for glory? have I fled to the Giver of life eternal, and found salvation in him? or does my name still stand in the list of those who are the slaves of sin, the children of wrath, and the heirs of hell? O my fellow-sinner! if you have hitherto professed to believe the Bible, and yet with the multitude neglected Jesus and salvation, learn more wisdom now. You cannot neglect this much

longer, without neglecting it for ever. Be then what you profess to be, be not a hypocrite or a practical infidel, and you will be a Christian.

§ 6. But, perhaps, the eye that reads this page is an eye that sees no glory like that it sees in Christ; yet if you have reason to hope it is so, still it is needful often to commune with your own heart, often to examine your own condition. Try yourself, my friend; the Judge eternal will try us all. Try your every grace; hereafter all must be tried. And is your faith like that described in the precious Scriptures, as genuine and saving? is it "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen?" does it engage your heart powerfully and decidedly for God and Christ? does it lead you to act as seeing him who is invisible? and though you see not God, to live, and pray, and persevere as if you saw him? Though the blessed Jesus is unseen by you, does faith lead you to trust him, and love him, and follow him? so that it may be said, whom having not seen, *you* love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, *you* rejoice; and whose word you hear with as much deference as if you heard him speaking from heaven.

While the things that are seen would engage your heart, does faith lead you to look above them? to choose a world you never saw, before that you daily see? to set your affections upon a heaven, of which by sight you never gained the slightest glimpse, in preference to the honors, and profits, and pleasures of earth and time? and to flee more earnestly from an unseen world of ruin, than you would from

> "Hunger, poverty, and pain,
> "And all the transitory ills below?"

Does faith cause you, with Enoch, to walk with God? with Noah, to dread God's threatened judgments? with Abraham, to forsake an earthly, and seek a better country? with Moses, to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt? with Paul, to count all things but loss that you may win Christ, and be found in him? and with all the holy host of martyrs, whatever you may lose, whatever you may suffer here, still to persevere, looking for a better resurrection?

In short, does faith thus govern your heart, thus direct your choice, thus rule your conduct, thus fire your love, thus wing your desires, thus strengthen your hopes, and thus enable you to live on earth as a stranger traveling to heaven? If it be genuine, if it be saving, these will be its effects; and if effects of this kind are not produced, you have but the shadow, instead of the substance.

Make it your study and prayer to bring faith into daily and hourly exercise. You believe in a gracious, an all-seeing and almighty God: act as in his sight. You believe in an atoning Savior: look daily to him as your life, your all. You believe in eternal judgment: now live as one whose actions and thoughts must then be scrutinized; live as you will wish to have done, when standing to receive the sentence of your Judge. You believe that there is a happy heaven: pursue it with that earnestness which eternal life demands. You believe that there is a miserable prison of eternal punishment: watch and pray against sin, the source of misery, the cause of the creation of hell. You believe that your way to eternity is beset with snares: watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. You be-

lieve that you are dark in your reason, and weak in your powers: listen then with all humility to him whose knowledge is as boundless as yours is confined. Receive implicitly whatever Jesus has revealed; and let it be enough to engage your belief, that he has said it. You believe that you are weak: let frequent daily prayer implore the guidance and strength of your God and Savior, to attend you through the world, down to death, and up to glory. Thus live as a believer. And when a few more suns have risen and set; when a few more days, and weeks, and months have rolled away; when you have suffered a few more of the pains, and enjoyed a few more of the pleasures of life; your days will be numbered, your time will be no longer, your farewell must be taken of earthly comfort, and your freedom from earthly pain will be complete. Then will you see what you now believe. Death, when it closes your eyes upon this world, will open them on the next; there to see all that is now unseen, to know what is now unknown; there to change faith for sight, and fleeting comforts for eternal life. Blessed are those servants that, when the last great change approaches, are found watching! Be not slothful, but a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Persevere, is the direction of the Savior; and let it animate you to think that perseverance will not long be requisite. Let faith direct your thoughts to future scenes. Like the watchmen on the mountains of Judea, watching the first glimmerings of the moon, let faith look for its returning Lord. In pleasing meditation, let faith descry the events of other years, and tell us the language of his saints in distant days. Ah! let it say to us, He comes—one star is blazing—the firma-

ment is catching fire from its flames: He comes—the lightning spreads before him—again it spreads, and turns midnight darkness into awful day: He comes—the last trumpet speaks him near: He comes—let us go hence! let us leave this ruined world! this perishing creation! Ah! Savior, Shepherd, Guardian, Friend, and God! thus wilt thou come! thus wilt thou visit earth a second time! But we—ah, we—must we wait those distant years! Ah no! long ere that time arrive, all who love thee here now, shall love and adore thee in the dwellings of unfading life.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE A LIFE OF PRAYER.

§ 1. Prayer is *a sacred privilege.* By it the Christian maintains intercourse with his God and Savior. Prayer brings down numberless blessings upon man. It is the breath of the soul. It is the life of religion. A Christian cannot live without it. A corpse maintains for a while the form of man, but the spirit is fled, it is destitute of life. The form of religion may be assumed where the life is wanting. Without prayer it is dead; the breath, the vital spirit, are wanting. Religion begun leads to prayer. Of every renewed sinner, it may be said, as it was of Paul, Behold he prayeth. Religion

strengthens, matures, and lives by prayer; and closes its course below with prayer, when the dying believer breathes out his soul and his desires together with Stephen's petition, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

§ 2. Consider the *solemnity* of prayer. The most solemn change that will ever take place in our situation, is that made by death, when we at once leave all the scenes of mortality for the more important scenes of eternity; quit the society of our nearest relatives and dearest friends to enter on the presence of Jesus and of God; and from being inhabitants of this changing world, are, in the twinkling of an eye, removed to eternal abodes of unchanging misery or bliss. This is a change whose terrors the wicked must dread, and whose solemnity the righteous must feel. But on earth there is a change which we may justly deem next in solemnity to that of death. It is the change made in our circumstances by prayer; often as unthought of as it is solemn. In death, we leave time for eternity; the converse of mortals for the presence of God. In prayer, we leave the business of time for that of eternity, and intercourse with man for intercourse with God. One minute our attention is occupied with those dying creatures, who, like ourselves, are hastening to the grave; the next, our business is with the great God who made heaven and earth. To him, though we behold him not, we speak, and are as really in his presence, as if death had dismissed us hence, and our separated spirits stood before him. You would not trifle in a dying hour; and if you feel aright the nature and solemnity of prayer, you will no more trifle in prayer than trifle in death.

Pursue this thought a little further. In prayer you

speak to God—that awful God whom you must shortly meet, with whom you must have a most solemn interview when a few years, at most, have rolled away —that God, in whose kingdom you will rejoice ten thousand millions of ages hence, or whose displeasure you will then be lamenting as your bitterest curse. Prayer is not the mere repetition of a few words, uttered by us when none can hear. The faintest whisper of real prayer passes beyond the limits of this world, and goes where we cannot at present fly; it enters the skies, and God hears it.

Suppose you could discern the glory and majesty of him who is invisible, how would you pray then! While looking up to the throne of his glory, small would seem the value of the universe in comparison of his love! Then what would earth and time appear! The sun, the moon, and stars glowing in the sky, would vanish into nothing, compared with him who fixed them there! With eyes fixed on heaven, and hearts sinking to the earth, overwhelmed with astonishment and rapture, might we view the glory of that God whom we must shortly meet. The splendors of eternal day might delight, the rewards of blessed spirits enrapture the astonished soul; but what would be the feelings these excited, compared with those springing from the view of his Majesty, whose presence is the source of that glory and the spring of that happiness! What would be your thoughts and feelings could you gain a glimpse of his Majesty! Would you see the sun? ah, no! the sun would shine unseen. Would you look upon the earth? ah, no! its bustles and its tumults, its pleasures and its sorrows, would pass unnoticed by.

Suppose then, whenever you pray, you could quit the earth for a short time, and enter the presence of this holy God, and after pouring out your desires and thanksgiving before him, could return to this world—how solemnly would you enter his presence; how fervently, yet with what awe, call upon his name and bow at his footstool; and with what a thoughtful serious mind would you return from these interviews to the business of life! O consider, you have now as really in prayer to speak to God as you would then—as really to go into his presence, though clouds, and darkness, and the veil of mortality hide him from your view.

Another consideration that should add solemnity to prayer is, that it cannot be an indifferent thing. You cannot rise up from your knees as you knelt down. You have either gained a blessing or incurred guilt. If offered through Jesus in sincerity, the continuance of former blessings, or the bestowment of new ones, is surely obtained. But if it be a formal lip-service, it is a mockery of the divine Majesty. When you rise from prayer, you must rise possessing the favor, or laboring under the displeasure of the Almighty.

§ 3. To have such impressions as these on your mind in the hour of prayer, is of no little moment; for fervent prayer, though the most inestimable of privileges, is often a difficult duty. To repeat a few lifeless words is indeed an easy thing, but to pray in sincerity a very different one. To push the world aside; to place ourselves as in the presence of God; surrounded by earthly things, to forget all that is earthly; and far from heavenly scenes, to have our hearts engaged among them; to bow down as before the throne of the Most

High; to address an invisible God as if he were visible; to have our thoughts, our hearts, our desires engaged in his service, and thus to hold communion with him; this is effectual fervent prayer, but this is no easy thing. Address the blessed God as in his immediate presence; pray to him, praise him, as if he were visible; and this is communion with him; but words repeated without thought, offend God and bring no blessings down upon the thoughtless creature that utters them.

§ 4. The *subjects* of prayer should chiefly be those blessings which respect God's glory and our own eternal welfare. The blessed Jesus has taught this in that form which he gave as a pattern for the devotions of his followers. The first three petitions respect the divine glory; "Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Thus he teaches us that this is the subject which should lie nearest to our hearts, and take the lead in our prayers. He introduces only one petition for earthly good, and that the most limited possible—"Give us this day our daily bread." Bread is what he tells us to implore, and that for but one day at a time.

Earthly blessings should not be a leading subject in prayer. It is true you may pray for them, and for deliverance from temporal evils; for the most eminent saints did so. But for every thing of this kind you should pray with resignation and submission, leaving the subject after all to God; for time is short, and earthly good of little importance to one who has to live for ever. Besides, our own blindness should teach the necessity of praying humbly and conditionally for what we may deem earthly blessings. God sees more

than we see, and he may see that the very objects we most importunately desire, might be a source of ruin here, or destruction hereafter. Rachel said, Give me children, or I die! God granted her desires; she had children given her, and died through the grant. God may see the objects we desire would be a bitter curse; the troubles we deprecate our greatest blessing. Life, that desired object, the sorest of evils; death, that dreaded foe, the best of friends. We may desire life for ourselves or others, when he may see storms of affliction too heavy to be borne arising, and therefore send death to lay our bodies in the grave, that silent abode, over which the tempests of life may pass, but which they never reach; and to conduct our spirits to that world, where

> "Pains, and groans, and griefs, and fears,
> "And death itself shall die."

For spiritual blessings you may pray without apprehension of asking amiss. For them you may go *boldly* to the throne of grace. These are blessings which it is for the glory of God to bestow, and for the good of man to receive. These are of everlasting importance, and everlasting worth. Whatever trifles others pray for, when your heart rises to heaven in solemn devotion, let your petitions chiefly relate to the glory of God and the honor of Christ. Pray that you may understand clearly, and believe firmly, the invaluable Gospel; that you may discern the infinite evil of sin, and comprehend the love of Christ; that you may be cleansed from all sin in his atoning blood; that with full confidence you may rest your eternal all on him, as on the Rock of ages; that you may obey his holy

instructions, copy his spotless example, and trust his sacred promises; that you may live on earth as one who belongs to heaven; that swelling multitudes may travel with you to that happy world; that the divine Spirit may rest on them and you; and that at length you may enter that world where all error and corruption being left behind, you shall continue to eternity, praising, loving, admiring, and adoring Him that sits upon the throne, and the Lamb that was slain, and redeemed you to God by his blood.

To see that such should be the leading subjects of prayer, observe what is expressed in a few scriptural petitions.

"Hallowed be thy name." "Thy kingdom come." "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Done *in* us, and done *by* us, and done *with* us, and done as perfectly and as cheerfully as it is done in heaven. Pray that "the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified." "I pray," says the apostle, "that your love may abound yet more and more;" "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith: that ye may know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge." "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Now the God of peace make you perfect in every good work, to do his will." "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."

What important prayers are these! The direction of an ancient poet, to pray for *mens sana in corpore sano*, a sound mind in a healthful body, has been admired and applauded; but how unspeakably did the

noblest advice of a heathen philosopher fall below the sublimity and importance of the subjects of Christian prayer!

§ 5. The word of God also represents what are the *requisites* of acceptable prayer.

Prayer must be sincere. If it be not the offering of the heart, it is worse than nothing. "God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." The bended knee, the suppliant look, the devout expression, cannot please him where the heart presents not the offering. No bodily services, or repetition of devotional but lifeless words, is sufficient. If that were prayer, teach a parrot to repeat them, and a parrot could pray. Such were the prayers of Israel of old. "This people draw nigh unto me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." Such are the prayers of myriads now. They ask for what they do not desire; beg for holiness and follow sin, and mock God with their solemn requests; because their hearts join not sincerely in any petition that their lips utter.

§ 6. Prayer should be solemn and fervent. "The effectual FERVENT prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

In the season of devotion we address that God whom we cannot love enough, and implore blessings of everlasting importance. At such a time reverence, humility, unfeigned sorrow for sin, earnest desire for blessings needed, and thankfulness for blessings possessed, cannot sufficiently be called into exercise. Think of God—and what is man! What a moment his life! What an insect himself! What an atom the world on which he dwells! Before that God what hu-

mility should we feel! with what reverence adore! What deep self-abasement should we cherish, and what entire abhorrence of the dreadful ingratitude and hellish evil of sin committed against such a Friend! Then, too, should the immense and unbounded love of God call forth gratitude the most devout. Who would cross the Atlantic ocean to save a fly perishing on the other side that ocean! Such love to a dying insect warms no human breast. But the Son of God, at his Father's appointment, performed a miracle of mightier love. Man, compared with him, is far more worthless than a fly compared with man. Yet, given by his Father, for us he left his heavenly dwelling, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. This "love of infinite degree," this "immeasurable grace," should ever be remembered in the hour of devotion. At such a season, too, there is every thing in our state to excite fervor. We speak to the God whose decision will fix our everlasting state; whose smile is life eternal, and whose frown eternal death. We ask him for blessings of eternal worth. How earnestly would a wretch, condemned to die, implore the mercy of his judge, if he saw that judge melting with compassion over him. And can we in prayer feel our state, and look forward to the solemn and decisive scenes of an endless world, and not be earnest?

§ 7. Prayer should be offered while exercising *faith* in your Redeemer's atonement and your heavenly Father's love. "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where

two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

It is true, some or all of these passages have a peculiar and special reference to faith in God, enabling the apostles to perform miracles for the confirmation of the Gospel; but while this is allowed, there can be no reasonable doubt of the importance of the exercise of faith, in imploring the more common blessings of his providence and grace. The exercise of faith will add fervor, solemnity and reverence to your devotions. You will then pray as seeing him who is invisible, and with the confidence of a child addressing a beloved and loving father. And to all Christians it is said, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith."

§ 8. With acceptable prayer must be connected the exercise of a benevolent and *forgiving* disposition. As an important part of prayer is the imploring of forgiveness for sins and defects, so we are solemnly assured, that while asking forgiveness of God we must exercise it to man. "When ye stand praying, forgive." "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." The divine Savior also taught his friends to pray, "Forgive us our debts AS we forgive our debtors." "Forgive us our sins; FOR we also forgive every one that is indebted to us." In the latter of these petitions the Christian is taught, while asking forgiveness, solemnly to declare to God, that he forgives all who have trespassed against him. An assertion which, if uttered by a person of an unforgiving disposition,

would be a lie told to God himself. In the former petition, we are taught to ask for that measure of forgiveness which we exercise. Forgive *as* we forgive. It is obvious, that a person using this petition who does not forgive others, in fact asks God not to forgive him, and thus implores a curse instead of a blessing. And this the Son of God has solemnly declared the unforgiving worshipper will bring down on his own soul: as he does not forgive, he shall not be forgiven.

§ 9. Prayer should also be *persevering*. "Be careful (full of care) for nothing; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." "Continuing instant in prayer." The Lord Jesus taught perseverance in prayer by two instructive parables. Luke, 18: 1–8; 11: 5–8. The blessings you solicit may not immediately be granted, yet still pray, and if they are really blessings, depend upon it, God at length will hear. He may see it wise and kind to exercise your faith and patience, by delaying mercies he intends to bestow; still, therefore, pray. Let not delay or discouragements damp your earnestness. "Wait on the Lord and be of good courage, and he will strengthen thine heart."

§ 10. Prayer should be *constant*. "Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks." "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always." At every suitable opportunity, on every stated season, and at other times, having the heart kept in a praying frame. This may be called praying always, praying without ceasing, in the same way as the sacrifice that was regularly offered every morning and evening in the temple, was called the perpetual sacrifice. Those prayers which are only offered by fits and starts, proceed not from a

heart reconciled to God. When any alarming danger threatens to overwhelm them, many, who never otherwise think of prayer, profess to pray. The profligate, or the man of the world, languishing out what he thinks his last hours, begins to pray; but let health return, and the profligate forgets his promises, his devotions, and his vows. Can such prayers be heard in heaven? Prayer should be a stated employment of part of every day. How often these seasons should be appointed, must partly depend upon the situation and circumstances in which persons are placed. The Psalmist appears to have had *seven* such stated seasons daily; Daniel had *three* of them. Many followers of Jesus Christ should not have less; but none that wish to walk with God should have less than two; one in the morning, and the other in the evening, of every day. To begin the day with God is unspeakably important. Every night we are preserved by his care; his eye, which never sleeps, watches over us, while we are insensible to all that may surround us. This goodness calls for every morning's praise. The day, with its snares and avocations, is then before us, and his help is needed to enable us that day to act the Christian's part, and his grace to prepare us for an eternal day above. Prayer should be the first employment; because, when just risen from repose, the mind is not distracted with perplexities and cares, as it is when it has been occupied for a while with the cares of the day. Let the first half hour, if possible the first hour of the day, be consecrated to reading the Scriptures, meditation, and prayer; and this will prepare you for the following employments of the day; will help you to walk with God, and strengthen you to

meet the temptations or troubles that may beset your path. Of the pious Colonel Gardiner, who is stated to have attained such fervency in prayer as few have equalled, and whose life was rendered eminently happy by religion, it is recorded that he devoted two hours to religious exercises every morning. If business called for his attention by four o'clock, he would thus be engaged, at latest, by two. The evening is also an equally suitable time for devotion. We have then for a little while done with the cares of the day; possibly have done with them for ever. We have enjoyed the mercies of God through another day. The night is at hand; possibly the night of death. How important at such a season is thanksgiving for the mercies which the departed day has brought! and prayer for pardon of its faults, for protection through the coming night, and for grace to prepare the soul for the evening of life, the night of death, and the bright morning of eternity. Time taken from prayer, is time misspent indeed. At least fix the morning and evening as stated seasons for devotion, and let nothing tempt you to neglect the solemn exercise. If neglected once, another and another excuse will arise for neglecting it again and again. A chain with one link broken, no longer binds; and a habit of duty once broken, may soon cease to be a habit. You cannot reasonably expect any spiritual blessing on a day begun without prayer. It will probably be a day of sin; it must, if you have proper feeling, be a day of uneasiness. Nor would you like to die some night, when you had lain down to sleep without communing with your God. O would you pray successfully, pray statedly. Be-

sides, such stated seasons for prayer cherish that frame of mind which is adapted to prayer; and you will find many intervals from business, and many circumstances in which you may and will lift up your heart unto God.

§ 11. It may assist you in offering your private addresses to God, to remember that every thing like a solicitous attention to language, or matter, is then utterly needless—God, who sees your heart, knows your meaning, and the broken language of an humble heart is acceptable to him; while studied eloquence in prayer is contemptible indeed. Pray to him as your heavenly Father; speak to him from your heart, and God will hear. If any rule is necessary to direct you how thus to pour out your desires before God, it is comprised in one word—*meditation*. Think of the greatness and majesty of God, and you will learn how to praise him. Think of his goodness, and you will learn to bless him. Meditate on your obligations to him; the numerous mercies you enjoy, the needful gifts of Providence, and the means of grace, the word of life, the great Redeemer, and the hope of glory; and you will surely know how to thank him. Review your life, reflect on your sins and ingratitude, and you will learn how to confess your offences to him. Meditate on your wants, your weakness, and imperfections, the love of Christ, the value of your soul and the nearness of eternity, and this will teach you how to pray for everlasting blessings. Look by faith into the eternal world, listen to your Redeemer's promises, and think of being for ever with him in a better state, and you will not need the language of others to express your earnest desires to be his humble follower here, and his glorified disciple there. A child knows how to ask favors from an affec-

tionate parent, and needs no form composed by others; and shall not a child of God acquire the same facility in speaking to his heavenly Father? What if, when first starting in the Christian course, he found a devout form adapted to cherish the flame of devotion, yet, when accustomed to the worship of the closet, habituated to communion with God, should he not indulge the spirit of a child, who knows that even his broken accents are welcome to his Father's ear?

§ 12. There is one requisite more of essential importance to successful and acceptable prayer—that it be offered in the Savior's name. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father *in my name*, he will give it you. At that day ye shall ask *in my name*. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." To ask a favor in another's name, is to present our petition, relying for success upon the influence of the friend whose name we are permitted to use.

Jesus Christ is in heaven, ever living to intercede for his friends as their advocate there. And when they pray in his name, they ask as his friends, relying on his intercession, and expecting success on his account. His sufferings, his merits, and his intercession, are the ground of their acceptance. In themselves there is nothing that can add weight to their prayers; but going in his name, the Father hears and blesses them for Jesus's sake. Ever pray in the name of Jesus.

§ 13. The observations already made, have been designed principally in reference to private devotion: but, as the *house of God* is the beloved spot to which religion often leads its friends, a remark may be introduced on public devotion. Be as solicitous to realize the presence of God, when surrounded by a crowd of

fellow-worshippers, as when no eye but that of God is fixed upon you. It is to be apprehended that multitudes profess to join in prayer who never pray. Their vacant looks, their wandering eyes, staring around to see who is present, or to mark the dress of those they know; their heads turned at every motion of the door to observe who is entering, but too plainly show them guilty of a profanation of sacred time, and of a dreadful mockery of God. It need scarcely be said, that you pray only when you join in the petitions offered, when your heart accompanies them. Alas, with how many is the case widely different from this! They appear to listen to the prayer as they listen to the sermon, without attempting to pray with the speaker; as if he alone were to pray for them, and they had nothing to ask for themselves, or as if he were speaking to them instead of addressing God. But this is not devotion; though only hearers when the preacher addresses them, if they expect any benefit when he speaks to God, they must be humble worshippers, pouring out the desires and confessions of their hearts before the throne of God. In all devotion, pray as on the borders of eternity. Closing the eyes during the time of public prayer, will frequently assist a worshipper in maintaining that seriousness and abstraction from the world which prayer demands; and when it is found to do this, it becomes an incumbent duty.

§ 14. Connected with prayer is *praise*. Many of the observations made already respecting prayer, apply equally to this sacred, and to a grateful heart delightful, part of divine worship. The wants of man call for prayer; the goodness of God demands praise. Many Christians, who pray much, are comparatively forget-

ful of praise. This springs from looking at their wants more than at their mercies, or from a want of grateful feelings for the blessings with which their years are crowned. The sacred Scriptures, which contain so many directions respecting prayer, also abound with admonitions respecting praise. A considerable portion of the book of Psalms is praise; and exhortations are frequently given, to present this grateful offering to the Most High: "Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness." "Praise is comely for the upright." "Offer unto God thanksgiving." "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

§ 15. In many congregations, singing constitutes a considerable part of public worship. This sacred exercise should ever be conducted in the spirit of humble devotion. It is frequently an address to God, and always connected with divine subjects. Perhaps, in few ways is God more insulted than by *hymns sung without devotion.* Much sin is thus committed. Many sing without considering whom they address, or what they utter. Sometimes the congregation engages their attention, and their eyes are wandering from place to place. At other times the tune attracts all their notice; and God and Jesus, and life or death eternal, and all the solemn truths the hymn on their lips may contain, are forgotten, while the eye is fixed, perhaps, on a stranger entering the door, or the ear is engaged in observing the harmony of a fleeting sound. O, watch against this common sin, into which thoughtless worshippers so often fall! God of old complained of some

who drew nigh to him with their lips, and honored him with their mouths, but their heart was far from him. In singing hymns descriptive of the feelings of the heart, it is needful to observe how far the feelings of our own hearts accord with the hymn; lest we should be guilty of uttering any thing approaching the nature of a solemn falsehood in the presence of the Most High. Keep in view the apostle's words, "I will sing with the spirit and with the understanding."

§ 16. Your present welfare and eternal happiness greatly depend on a strict attention to prayer. Its value will never be fully known till that day when an end shall be put to every hope that is not eternal. Then, when the sepulchres of brass and marble melt away, the pyramids of brick and stone moulder back to dust; when humble cottages and gorgeous palaces, little villages and mighty cities, fruitful plains and barren deserts, lowly valleys and lofty mountains, and the world itself shall be weltering in final flames; then, when the solemnities of eternal judgment commence, proceed, conclude, and all have their unchangeable abodes—then, and not till then, will the value of devout intercourse with God be fully known. O keep those scenes in view! and no earthly pleasure, no earthly care, will lead you to neglect communion with your heavenly Father.

§ 17. To increase your sense of its value, observe the importance attached to prayer by the *example* and in the *life* of the Lord Jesus Christ. His life below was a life of devotion; and events of peculiar importance were accompanied with a peculiar attention to prayer. When the Holy Jesus was baptized, he prayed. Before he chose his twelve apostles, he went out

into a mountain to pray. Before his transfiguration, he took James, and John, and Peter apart into a high mountain, for the same sacred exercise. When he stood by the grave of Lazarus, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and thanked his Father for hearing him. When certain Gentiles desired to see him, after speaking of the effect of his sufferings, he prayed, "Father, glorify thy name." After working many miracles, on one occasion he rose in the morning a great while before day, and went into a solitary place and prayed. At another time, when he had healed great multitudes, he withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. When he had fed five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, he sent away the multitude, and went up into a mountain apart to pray; and when the evening was come, he was there alone. When he foresaw Peter's temptation, he prayed for him that his faith should not fail. He closed the solemnities of his last supper with an affecting prayer. For those who crucified him he prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." And on the cross, before he expired, he addressed God, saying, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." As thus, on every solemn occasion, prayer expressed the feelings of his heart, so he *persevered* in prayer. When he went out into a mountain to pray, before he chose the twelve, he continued all night in prayer to God. And after feeding the multitude with a few loaves, and retiring for prayer to a lonely mountain, he continued there from evening almost till the following morning dawned. Thus did he converse with his heavenly Father. Amidst the stillness of midnight his prayers ascended to heaven. Though he had no inward corruptions to harass his

holy soul, his exemplary devotion manifested his love to prayer, and proclaims to his followers, that prayer should be their pleasure and their strength.

While such was the conduct of the holy Savior, what should be that of the unworthy disciple? Surely, if you follow Jesus, prayer should be the pleasure of every day; and when any circumstance occurs of more than usual moment, let it be attended with more than usual prayer. See the Savior on a lonely mountain employing the whole night in prayer, or rising for that sacred exercise before the first glimmering of the dawn. See this, and learn of him. Leave the bed of sloth to commune with your God. And when called to engage in duties of peculiar weight, then, like the Lord, watch unto prayer. Amidst the silence of midnight let your prayers and your praises be ascending to God.

§ 18. The value of prayer, and the strongest encouragement for it, appears in the numerous *promises* made to it, with which the Scriptures abound. "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good." "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will save them." "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. If ye, being evil,

know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

These are a few of the numerous promises made to prayer. How precious are the blessings promised! If solid holiness and real peace in life, if comfort or triumph in death, and the love of God through a whole eternity, are important to you, then is prayer unspeakably important; for all the grace that makes the deathless soul a partaker of these blessings, is promised in answer to sincere, humble, fervent prayer; and it is given. All who truly pray obtain these blessings, and none possess them who live a prayerless life.

§ 19. The *blessings* that have been granted to prayer illustrate its importance and its worth. The records of religious history abundantly prove that God is the hearer of prayer; and this not only on subjects of great magnitude, but on those of real, though of less moment. Abraham prayed for Sodom; and if ten righteous persons could have been found in it, God would have spared that guilty city. Abraham's servant, sent to obtain a suitable wife for Isaac, prayed to God for direction, and was guided to the lovely Rebecca. Jacob, alarmed at Esau's approach, in his distress prayed to God, and prevailed, and Esau became his friend. Moses prayed that the plagues might be removed from Egypt, and they were removed; again and again he implored mercy for stubborn and backsliding Israel, and Israel was spared, even when God had proposed to exterminate the guilty race. Hannah, insulted by a

rival wife, prayed to the Friend of the distressed; he answered her prayer, and she became the mother of Samuel. When Israel was oppressed by the Philistines, Samuel prayed, and those invaders were scattered, and fled. "Elijah," doubtless to correct and reform a murderous, idolatrous nation, "prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth for the space of three years and six months; and he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." On another occasion, when vindicating the honors of his God, he prayed, and fire descended from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice he was offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the water that was in the trench around the altar; while the astonished idolatrous multitude cried out, "The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God." Hezekiah, near to death, prayed, and fifteen years were added to his life. His country was invaded by Sennacherib's apparently irresistible army; he prayed, and in one night an angel from the Lord destroyed one hundred and eighty-five thousand of that mighty host. Daniel and his companions, threatened with destruction, because none could tell Nebuchadnezzar his prophetic dream, prayed, and the dream and the explanation were discovered to him. Jonah, amid the swellings of the deep, prayed, and was delivered from his dismal prison. Nineveh, warned by Jonah of impending ruin, prayed, and God turned "the half-descending stroke aside." The apostles, threatened by their enemies, prayed that "with all boldness" they might "speak the word;" the place where they were assembled was shaken, they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake with the boldness they desired. Peter was im-

prisoned by Herod: the church of God prayed without ceasing for his deliverance, and their prayer was more powerful than chains, and bars, and bolts, and prison doors, and military guards. While they prayed, God heard; an angel descended and liberated Peter and he himself became, to those who were praying for him, the messenger of his own deliverance. Cornelius, the devout Gentile, prayed, and an apostle was divinely instructed to go and preach the Gospel to him. Paul and Silas were imprisoned at Philippi; shut in the inner prison, and fast in the stocks. They prayed, and an earthquake shook the prison to its foundations; and all its doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. Such are some of the memorable instances of the success of prayer recorded in the sacred pages. Truly, when viewing them, we may exclaim, "Prayer moves the hand that moves the world."

§ 20. Few that are acquainted with the grace of God, are unacquainted with the efficacy of prayer. Mr. Baxter observes on this subject, "How many times have I known the prayer of faith to save the sick, when all physicians have given them up for dead! It hath been my own case more than once or twice, or ten times; when means have all failed, yet have I been relieved by the prevalency of fervent prayer."

§ 21. The willingness of the Father to hear prayer, and the intercession of Christ in behalf of his followers, combine to illustrate the value of this sacred exercise. The Lord said, "At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me." As much as to say, If I did not intercede at all for you, yet such is the Father's

great love to you, that he will grant you what you ask in my name. But though this is the case, still the Savior pleads as the advocate of his friends. "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." "Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

What strong encouragement for prayer! The eternal Father willing to hear our requests, the Son of God, by his intercession, adding weight to every devout petition, and efficacy to every suitable desire; to all this the aids of the divine Spirit are added. How precious is prayer thus sanctioned! How wonderful the love of God that gives us such encouragement!

§ 22. You may discern the worth of devotion by glancing at its *happy effects* upon the truly devout. True devotion trains the soul for heaven; it raises the Christian's views and desires above the groveling objects of a dying world, and endows the humble worshiper with steady fortitude to press onward to heaven, though ten thousand dangers should beset the way. In prayer,

> "His hand the Christian fastens on the skies,
> "And bids earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl."

Prayer is also his solace in the day of adversity. It is a relief to the really pious, to tell their sorrows to their compassionate God. and resign themselves to his

disposal, saying, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" They cannot lose their chief support, whose principal happiness springs from God as their Father, Jesus as their Savior and Intercessor, and immortality as their future portion. Let the world deprive me, may be the language of the Christian, of all its blessings and satisfactions; let it take from me relatives and friends; let it load me with ignominy and suffering, or deprive me of liberty: these things it may do, but it cannot take from me the comforts of prayer; it cannot take away death, that shall dismiss me ere long to nobler worship and better enjoyments above.

Equally is prayer the Christian's safeguard in prosperity. When earthly comforts and sensible delights surround us, we are tempted to forget that the time for these things will soon be no longer. A hedge of roses, or of sweet briers, may hide the loveliest prospects from our view; so do the concerns and delights of life hide the sweet regions of immortality. But when we retire from the world, the things unseen again appear before our souls. Then we see the vanity of all below the sun; see that prosperity is but a snare that would tempt us to destruction. Then we may learn to pray—O save us from the snares we dread! Save us from a world as deceitful as it is attractive! and let not its momentary shadows of happiness deprive us of the everlasting substance! Blessed Jesus! however allured, let us not love a world that murdered thee! nor seek our portion where thou wast but a pilgrim and a stranger!

Thus, whatever be your lot, devotion will lessen its evils, and add to its comforts. The more spiritual and fervent it is, the more gladness will it diffuse through the heart. "Even the tears of penitential sorrow and contrition, or of sympathy and benevolence, into which a devout person may sometimes be melted, have a sweetness in them not to be expressed, and are more to be desired than the greatest joys of the irreligious."

§ 23. Such being the value and importance of prayer, it is not strange that the Christian should at times be tempted to neglect this sacred duty; that Satan should labor hard to disturb the soul in its best moments, and to prevent its obtaining the blessing. Sometimes he suggests: "Such prayers as yours are worse than nothing: you had better not pray at all, than pray as you do." Ah, look on this temptation as one that proceeds from your great enemy. If you ever yield to it, you will soon perceive it answers his designs; your soul will grow more dead, prayer still more a burden. Instead of your state mending by this neglect, it will grow worse: your heart less and less disposed for prayer, and the frame of your mind less and less suited to it. Pray, then, and continue instant in prayer. Pray, though the world with its cares would hinder you. Pray, though the devil with a host of temptations would prevent you. Still pray, and God will hear. And when unable to pray as you *would*, still pray as you can; and pray for help to pray better.

Pursue this course; cleave to the great Intercessor; and then, in a little while, in a brighter world, prayer shall be changed for endless praise;

"While sweet remembrance calls to mind
"The scenes of mortal care;
"When God, your God, for ever kind,
"Was present to your PRAYER."

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHRISTIAN A PILGRIM UPON EARTH, AND A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY OF GOD.

§ 1. An important and pleasing view of the Christian's state and character is that of a traveler to a better world.

"Turn, pilgrim, turn, thy cares forego,
"All earth-born care is wrong;
"Man wants but little here below,
"Nor wants that little long."

The Scriptures describe life as a pilgrimage, and the child of God as a traveler to a lasting home. "I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were." "When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return." The aged patriarch, Jacob, said, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." Of him, and those who lived much longer than he, it is said, that they "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth;" but they "desired a better country,

that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city."

Cherish the views these holy men professed. You, if a Christian indeed, are but a traveler here. Infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, and age, succeed each other so rapidly, that many scarcely reflect they are in one, before they find themselves advanced to another. A poor man, who had spent more than seventy years on earth, once observed to me, that his time seemed but like two or three weeks. Yes, life is a pilgrimage, and short is the passage from the cradle to the tomb: some find it a longer, some a shorter, but all a short and hasty journey. It is hasty, though its haste be unperceived. A traveler in a packet, driven by steam and tide down the smooth surface of a river, may indulge the illusion that all he sees on shore, the trees, the spires, the villages are in rapid motion, hurrying away; but it is he who moves, and all on shore is still. Thus, even when least sensible of the speed with which you go, are you advancing with sure and rapid haste to the eternal world. Think when you lie down, think when you rise up, think when you walk, and think when you rest, I am but a traveler here. Amid the cares of life, remember these are but the cares of a journey; amid its pleasures, these are but the comforts of an inn. This world is not my world; for I am but a traveler here.

§ 2. Think of *those who are gone.* The great and noble, who once turned the world upside down—what are they? where are they now? Those who abounded in riches, or revelled in pleasures—where are they? and what is theirs? The moment that they breathed

their last, riches, pleasures, pomps, and honors vanished all. "Those lying vanities of life, that ever-tempting, ever-cheating train"—what are they to those whose journey to eternity is finished? Their life is ended; that valued life is valued no longer. What one day they would not have resigned for the world, the next is snatched from them, and they are consigned over to the grave. What is then to them the value of all they once most loved and prized? It is but a moment since they were warm with life, gay with hopes and pleasures, or perplexed with plans and cares; and now all these are finished for ever.

§ 3. Think of the *living;* look at the multitudes that crowd a populous city, and reflect how soon *all* will have left this world, and be for ever fixed in another. All their business brought to an eternal close. All their transient griefs and joys eternally ended. No longer traversing the streets, hurried with cares, and distracted with business; no longer concerned about the varying changes and commotions of the world, about the nations that rise or that fall; but silent in the dust. Think, that could you revisit those now crowded streets when one hundred years are passed, if no new generation arose, you would find them entirely deserted; not a single passenger in them, nor an inhabitant in the houses; but the streets, where a blade of grass is never seen, then covered with it; the houses falling into ruin; many of them already in the dust; the birds of the desert building their nests in the deserted rooms, and foxes, half hid with grass and nettles, peeping through the shattered windows. The houses of divine worship all forsaken; every preacher

gone from his pulpit; every crowded congregation vanished and forgotten in the dust; and all as silent as the midst of an Arabian desert, or as the chambers of the grave. O, act as a stranger and pilgrim while in so vain a world!

§ 4. Or view the subject, by indulging pensive reflection on the transient nature of all the most endeared earthly ties. Think with yourself, Could I rise from the tomb when the year two thousand comes, and look around on the world I shall then have so long forsaken, what a scene of desolation would it present to me! Not those only whom I saw go before me, but all I left would have gone to eternity. Could I approach their now cheerful hearths, I should miss them there; walk their gardens or their fields, I should not find them there; go to their tombs, and even there would not one wretched trace be found, nor even a stone remain, to tell that they had ever been.

Look forward a little further to the period, when all the noise, and tumult, and business of this world shall have closed for ever. How has it vanished! How have its short-lived multitudes departed! Their business over, their little pleasures finished, their hasty sorrows ended; their doom pronounced, their endless dwelling fixed, and their once gay, distracting, perplexing world lost! vanished! gone for ever! Let its admirers tell us of honors and fame, that will last as long as the sun shall shine or the world endure. Alas, contemptible honors! that will endure for so brief a span! The sun is but a lamp that lights our pathway to an endless world. The earth is but the road, prepared for pilgrims to travel, till, in the eternal abodes of grief or bliss, they reach an endless home. It is but as a mo-

ment, as an inch of time, as the darting of an arrow, the falling of a star, the twinkling of an eye, or the glancing of a thought, before all which you now behold shall pass away from you as a dream when one awaketh, and give place to those eternal scenes. Then, farewell earth, farewell sun, moon, and stars; farewell a busy or an idle, a sad or a pleasurable world! but, no farewells are known beyond the grave. To the scenes which will then open upon you, you will never bid adieu. Start forward, then, my fellow-pilgrim, start forward, in your thoughts, to everlasting scenes, and roam among the immeasurable ages that lie beyond the judgment-day. How the world recedes as you advance. It sinks to a speck—to a mote—to nothing. How six thousand years, or six thousand ages, dwindle as you sail down the tide of eternity; they sink to an hour—to a moment—to the twinkling of an eye—to nothingness itself. O, remember that on that awful tide you must shortly sail, when the world is nothing to you. Strive to love it no more than you will do, when, myriads of ages after its destruction, you look back upon it. Value its honors as you will value them then, and prize its pleasures as then you will prize them; and let the prospect of those amazing scenes strike deeper on your heart the salutary thought —I am but a traveler here.

§ 5. Above all, let the full *prospect of eternity* deepen the impression: let but the solemn idea of eternity dwell in your mind, and life must then appear a journey or a dream. "Suppose," says a writer of the seventeenth century,* "that the vast ocean were distilled

* Bates.

drop by drop, but so slowly, that a thousand years should pass between every drop, how many millions of years would be required to empty it! Suppose that this great world, in its full compass, from one pole to another, and from the top of the firmament to the bottom, were to be filled with the smallest sand, but, so slowly, that every thousand years only a single grain should be added, how many millions would pass away before it were filled! If the immense superficies of the heavens, wherein are innumerable stars, were to be filled with figures of numbers, and every figure signified a million, what created mind could tell their number, much less their value! Having these thoughts, I reply, the sea will be emptied drop by drop, the universe filled grain by grain, the numbers written in the heavens will come to an end; and how much of eternity is spent? Nothing; for infinitely more remains."

O, keep your eyes fixed on that eternity! look not at the things which are seen, but at things which are not seen; "for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." Life is a vapor, a point, a nothing; eternity is all. Yet a little while, and the golden hours of life will be gone; the last sands in the glass of time will have run out; the sun will have passed over the dial; the arrow will be flown; the vapor will be vanished, and time will be no longer: but vast, boundless, joyful or dreadful eternity knows no limits, and fears or hopes no end. How can you much rejoice in pleasures that are dying while you enjoy them! or sorrow much at distresses that are vanishing while you feel them! Loosen, then, your heart from the earth: it is but a world of dreams and shadows, through which you journey to a world

of solemn and eternal realities. Let the world talk of their pleasures, and be as cheerful as their condition should render them wretched; but, do you think of ending time and unending eternity. ETERNITY! blessed or dreadful word! whose meaning no numbers can unfold, no ages can declare; into whose depths no eye but that of God has pierced; a span whose length no heart has ever comprehended. O, look at that eternity more! So near the world where all is solemn, should you trifle? So near the state where all is endless, can you prize what is perishing? At the gate of eternity, on the threshold of an endless world, or, at most, with but a few steps before you must step into it, are the concerns of a fleeting pilgrimage of much importance? Are you so near doing what you must do for ever; so near rejoicing, where you must rejoice for ever, or mourning, where you must mourn for ever; and should not this make a transitory life and a perishing world little things indeed? Live then, O live as a traveler to eternity; a pilgrim here, pressing to a happy, endless home!

§ 6. While this is your condition, if a Christian indeed, even here you *belong to a better world.* You are a stranger; but, you have a settled dwelling-place. You are a pilgrim; but you have a rest.—There is a family to which you belong; a family in that country "where pilgrims roam no more." That family is the family of God, and that home is heaven. "You are no more a stranger and foreigner, but a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the HOUSEHOLD of God." You belong to Christ, "of whom *the whole family in heaven and earth* is named."

It is true, the splendors of eternal day do not yet

blaze upon your dazzled eye; nor do the first-born sons of light, arrayed in immortal youth and glory, yet visibly walk or commune with you: it is true, the gladness that is mingled with no alloy does not yet overflow your soul; nor have your eyes yet seen the King, the Lord of hosts. But soon you shall join the disciples of Jesus, who have passed the stream of death, and rest from every labor. They shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Jesus, their Shepherd, who was "their boast through time, is their bliss through eternity." Happy conquerors! But the disciples of Jesus below belong to the same family. One part is not dearer to God than the other. The "*whole* family in heaven and earth" has the same parent, and is loved with the same love. The whole family has but one Shepherd, and has the same interest in his overflowing kindness and tender care. The same hand protects them all. The same blood redeemed them all. The same love has crowned, or is about to crown them all. The whole family has but one Father, one Savior, one Sanctifier, and one heaven. The same privileges belong to all; the same eternal love is fixed on all. The same Spirit inhabits all, and the same heaven is the home of all. Part are landed on the heavenly shore; the gales of death are driving others into the harbor; and to it all the rest, urged on by wind and tide, hasten apace. The whole family in heaven and earth will soon be the family in heaven; a family for ever unbroken there.

§ 7. Such is the Christian's state. My dear brother or sister, is it yours? It is, if you belong to Jesus Christ, in spirit and in truth. O, think of it again; how ennobling a connection! And, O! remember how

you were brought into it, when only death eternal was your desert. Then Jesus pitied you. Then "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved you, even when you were dead in sins, quickened you with Christ; (by grace are you saved;) and raised you up, and made you sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards you, through Christ Jesus."

This view of the Christian state should make the heaviest earthly trials appear to you as they did to St. Paul—light afflictions, which are but for a moment. If this world were your all, well indeed might you make much account of its trials and griefs; but, should a citizen of heaven, a member of God's immortal family, *deeply* feel the trials of a rough but short voyage, or of an unpleasant but hasty journey; could one of the family who has reached his rest return to the world to spend a few more days below, how light would he esteem those trials which are the trials of a moment! how little would he regard those afflictions, that, as in the twinkling of an eye, will vanish for ever! In the day of trial think, This is not my country: there is no trouble in that happy land. This is not my home; but I shall reach it soon, and then shall bid a last farewell to sorrow and to care.

§ 8. In this view also, how momentous is the pursuit of holiness—how infinitely inconsistent with your character is the indulgence of sin! Could an angel of light, or one of the spirits of the just, visit this world, and spend a few years here, how inexpressibly shocking would it be thought for such a being to indulge in iniquity! Would it not be said to him, How dreadfully

inconsistent is this with your character and your connections! Do you not belong to heaven? are you not a member of the family of God? and will you plunge from that height of privilege, and disgrace that sacred character? If you are a Christian, you belong to the same family, and should pant after the lovely likeness of Jesus, which glorified spirits bear. Like theirs should be your love and hatred, your aversion and delight. The dispositions that dwell in their breasts, are those you should cherish in yours. The spirit that glows in their souls, is the spirit that should animate yours. If viewed aright, willful sin would appear almost as shocking in you as it would in them; for the whole family in heaven and earth is one in Christ Jesus. One in privileges. one in blessings, one in friends, one in obligations; and, therefore, bound by every holy tie to be *one in principle, one in disposition, one in practice.* Revere yourself. Respect your high and holy calling, and pray to live and act as a member of Jesus' family, as a traveler to the skies. Love not the world, neither the things of the world; for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

§ 9. Learn from this important view of your condition one lesson more. It should teach you to live *waiting for your Lord.* "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord. Blessed are those servants whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching." "I say unto all, Watch." The followers of Christ are described as those who have turned from idols to serve the living God, and to WAIT for his Son from heaven. Important representation! may you feel it aright. A waiting frame of mind is that the Christian should

ever cherish. But, what is it to wait? Let a familiar illustration furnish a reply.

The father of a numerous family leaves his children, intending to go and settle in a foreign land. Before he departs, he says, "My dear children, I am going to leave you for a while, but not for ever. I am going to prepare for you, in a country where we shall be happier than we can be here. As soon as I have made the needful preparations I shall return to fetch you; therefore, wait and be ready." The father departs; his children continue in their old abode, but with new feelings. It is hardly like their abode now; for they are expecting to go. They pursue their needful duties, attend as before to necessary concerns, but still their hearts are gone after their father. They are looking for their new abode. They are waiting for their father's coming.

Such are the feelings and views which you should cherish. Not feelings that will prevent your discharging the duties of life; that will drive you into a desert, or turn you to a hermit; but, that will lead you to act and live as not at home, but looking for your Lord; waiting as those children would wait. Not building on long years below; not expecting great things here; but with a heart untied from the world, ready to go, be the warning ever so short, and to welcome your Lord, let him come ever so soon.

Blessed are they who indulge this watching, waiting spirit: the King of heaven and earth has pronounced them blessed.

§ 10. But perhaps I am addressing one of a character very opposite to that described in these pages. Per-

haps you who read these lines are no member of the family of God; no fellow-citizen with the saints; no heir of heaven and immortality. If it be so, O! let me for a moment affectionately speak to you. How pitiable is your condition! Your transient morning might be the dawn of an immortal day! Your vain, half-painful, half-pleasing life on earth, might be the forerunner of an endless life of unmixed bliss above! But, you slight the Savior who would conduct you to that abode. You, who might, through the grace of Jesus, ascend to the kingdom of God, and range that blessed world for ever, are satisfied, alas! with the low scenes of earth. You might rival angels, as an inhabitant of heaven; but, by taking up your portion here, become the rival of the brutes that perish. Here you bury all your hopes. Here you renounce that great salvation, which, once finally lost, can never be regained. O, sinful and unhappy choice! When we see swine wallowing in the mire, we see them gratifying themselves, and losing nothing by their pleasure; but when we see immortal beings wallowing on earth in the mire of sin and sensuality, we see them losing more than tongue can express. To see millions that might be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; that might, in seraphic bliss, walk the spacious regions of heaven, and, washed in the blood of the Lamb, be happy and glorified for ever: to see these slighting the only Savior's grace and love, rejecting immortal hopes, and damning their own immortal souls: to see the young and the aged, the gay and the grave, the cheerful and the sad, the rich and the poor, doing this by millions, is a pitiable sight indeed! What must it appear to the angels of heaven?

"Could they tremble, 'twere at such a sight."

Are you one of the number? Unhappy creature! how poor! how wretched! how undone! O, awake, before eternal ruin awakes you! and while the Savior invites you to his fold, to his family, be not so besotted by sin, so led captive by the devil, as to refuse the offered mercy.

CHAPTER VII.

ON CHRISTIAN HOLINESS.

§ 1. When heathen philosophers described their virtuous man, they represented him as filled with self-conceit and pride, in consequence of the virtues he had acquired, and the heights to which he had raised himself above the common level. One of them represents this man of virtue as superior to the gods; because they were virtuous by nature, but he by choice. Such was the satanic pride inculcated by the men that modern infidels admire. Christianity requires holiness of the most elevated kind, but connects this holiness with the deepest humility. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." "Follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

The Scriptures recognize not as a thing of any value, that negative kind of virtue, which consists in doing no harm. To leave undone what we ought to do, is as really sin, as to do what we ought not. Accordingly, the Christian's faith is represented, not as faith which merely preserves him from evil but which "works by

love." The Christian's love is described, not as love which evaporates in empty professions, but which constrains "him to live not to himself, but the Lord Jesus Christ." The servant who had one talent committed to him, which he neglected to improve, is declared to be a slothful and wicked servant; not because he had wasted that talent, but because he had made no improvement of the trust. The blessed Savior describes myriads as condemned to destruction with the devil and his angels, not for crimes they had perpetrated, but for the neglect of duties they had omitted. When the different virtues that should adorn the Christian character are compared to fruit, this fruit is represented as indispensably necessary. This lesson is inculcated by the Lord in various expressive ways. He taught it by the parable of a fig-tree planted in the vineyard. The owner sought fruit, not leaves; and his forbearance was extended to the tree, under the hope of its producing fruit. The great Husbandman expects the fruits of piety; and the leaves of a fair profession will not be valued where the fruit is wanting. By an expressive miracle the Lord taught the same important lesson, when he said to the barren fig-tree, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. Many professors of religion appear satisfied if they disgrace not their profession by flagrant inconsistency; yet, let such consider that the fig-tree in the vineyard was not ordered to be cut down because it bore pernicious fruit, but because it bore no fruit. The tree which withered at Jesus's word, was not blasted because it was covered with poisonous berries, but because it had nothing but leaves. As the adorable Jesus thus declares that his followers will produce the fruits of holiness; he also

declares that this will not be in a small and inconsiderable degree. When he compares himself to a vine, and his disciples to the branches, he says of those disciples, "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear MUCH fruit." In the parable of the sower, he describes his disciples as producing thirty, sixty, and a hundred-fold; some as rising to piety much more elevated than that of others; yet, while some yield a hundred-fold, those who produce the least yield thirty-fold. Ask the husbandman, and he will tell you that thirty-fold is no inconsiderable increase. Conformable with these representations are the divine admonitions: "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, ALWAYS ABOUNDING in the work of the Lord." "Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace WITHOUT SPOT AND BLAMELESS."

§ 2. An instructive example of the spirit with which Christians should pant after holiness was exhibited by the apostle Paul: "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." A conscience void of offence towards God, that should charge him with no neglect of God's precepts, that should witness that he devoted his whole heart, and all he was and had, to God. A conscience void of offence towards men, that should bear testimony to his concern to discharge all the duties of life, to do all as he would have them to do to him, to furnish none with any cause of complaint against him, but rather, as far as ability extended, to do good to all around him. This he labored to possess *always:* yet, after all, acknowledged himself less than the least of all saints; the chief of sinners, saved by

grace. The same spirit breathes in his affectionate address to the Philippians:—"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." When Paul made this impressive declaration, he had probably been nearly thirty years a Christian. His splendid course was nearly run; he had labored above measure; he had suffered much; he had been enabled to exemplify, in no common degree, the mild and brilliant glories of Christianity—the zeal that never tires the love that never cools, the patience that never wearies, the benevolence that never slackens; yet, such were his ideas of the exalted nature of gospel holiness, that after these long years of labor, of suffering, and of ripening piety, he still pressed on, and aimed at something higher than all the heights he yet had reached. Nor do the Scriptures represent this laboring after holiness as something peculiar to the great apostle; for the Holy Spirit directed him to add, "Brethren, be ye followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample."

§ 3. But in the pursuit of Christian holiness, the word of God directs us to an infinitely higher pattern for imitation than that now contemplated. "Be ye followers of God, as dear children." Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." As the blessed God is proposed as a pattern for imitation, in the exercise of benevolent affections; the holy Jesus is set before us as an example we are called to copy in the general conduct of life. "Christ also

suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." "He that saith he abideth in *him*, ought himself also so to walk EVEN AS HE WALKED." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." A nobler example of spotless holiness cannot be proposed than that of the holy Jesus. Even infidels have admired his unblemished life, and on it passed eulogiums. But his disciples are called upon to imitate, as well as to admire, to follow, as well as to applaud. Cherish the spirit, that, burning with desires for a closer resemblance to the blessed Savior, and for the diffusion of his glory, thinks nothing gained while any thing remains ungained, nothing done while any thing remains undone. Except when you acknowledge what God has done for you, to cherish gratitude for grace enjoyed, forget all that you have gained, and reach at more. It is an apostolic lesson, FORGET the things *behind*, and reach after those before.

§ 4. Christian holiness must be *progressive*. Whatever attainments in the divine life you may have reached, much is yet unattained. In eminent Christians, how low, how weak are Christian graces, compared with what they ought to be! but in many of the followers of the Lamb, how much lower! how much weaker!

The commands given in the sacred Scriptures expressly require advancement in Christian holiness. "Giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these

things ye shall never fall. Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

The reality and importance of advancement in Christian holiness are also inculcated strongly in the prayers of the inspired writers for their fellow disciples. What is thus the subject of divine commands, and of inspired prayers, is also represented by the blessed Savior as receiving his peculiar approbation. When he commends the church at Thyatira, and says, "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works," he adds, "AND THE LAST TO BE MORE THAN THE FIRST."

The experience of all Christians who have *honored* their profession by consistent holiness, bears testimony to the correctness of these statements. Their humility has deepened; their faith has strengthened; their hopes have become more bright; their love has assumed, not the brightness of a flash or momentary blaze, but of a steady flame. Their devotedness to God has become more entire; their reliance on Christ more pure, and unmingled with other dependence. The depravity of their own nature has been more clearly seen, and been viewed with more abhorrence. Its corruptions have been opposed, and in many instances so conquered that their power has hardly been felt. It is said of Isaac Watts, that he was by nature quick of resentment; but by habitual practice, gentle, modest, and inoffensive. I remember having some knowledge of a person, a number of years ago, whose natural disposition seemed covetous; but who had followed the precepts of the Gospel till liberality was no longer a difficult duty, and it appeared to him almost or quite as easy to give as to receive. In the earlier stage

of his Christian progress, it seemed to him much to give away a religious book that had cost a few pence; when more advanced, he gave scores of much more expensive books away; and I have understood, even sold part of his own library, to enable him to pursue this mode of promoting religion.

If then you would adorn the holy Gospel, and walk worthy the character of a child of the holy God, let it ever be impressed on your heart, that it is not merely holiness, but *ripening*, *advancing* holiness, which you are to follow.

§ 5. Many are the weighty motives that urge upon the Christian the incessant pursuit of perfect holiness. You should pursue holiness with all the energy of your soul: because this life is the only season in which some Christian graces can be exercised. It is now that we can serve the Lord, who redeemed us by his blood. Now, in sorrow we may practice resignation to the will of God: the Christian cannot in heaven—there are no sorrows there. Now must we learn lessons of forgiveness: the blessed will find no enemies to forgive beyond the grave. Now must we prove our faithfulness in the scenes of the Christian warfare; for only this world is the field of conflict: no spiritual foes disturb the peace of heaven. Now should our tempers, amidst ruffling, disturbing things, acquire the serenity of Christ's: there is nothing to ruffle in the realms above. Now must we feed the hungry and clothe the naked:

"In heaven are found no sons of need."

Now must we visit the sick and afflicted, or never; for above, the inhabitant shall never say, I am sick. Now

must we instruct the illiterate, and spread the Gospel, or never: and as we sow, we shall hereafter reap. And would you not wish, in these respects, to copy him who went about doing good. The time for these will soon be passed; and once gone, is gone for ever.

§ 6. Follow holiness; because thus you may glorify God and recommend religion to man. Doubtless, in many instances, the calm but powerful eloquence of a holy life has awakened the thoughtless to attention to their best interests, and taught even scoffers wisdom. Thus enforced,

"Truth from the lips has come with double sway
"And fools, who 'else had laugh'd, have learn'd' to pray."

The meek forbearance that resents no injury; the calm submission that never utters a murmur; the expansive love that pities and blesses friends and foes; and all the unostentatious charms of Christian piety; these even when they shine like the stars in solemn silence yet, like them, utter a voice,

"The hand that form'd us is divine."

These impress hearts that no arguments would reach, no reasonings convince; and lead even some that know not God to acknowledge that there is a power in religion to which they are strangers, a reality of which they have no conception.*

* Of the effects of consistent piety, the following pleasing anecdote furnishes one illustration out of many:

"In a family in the north of Ireland, a pious young woman was engaged as a servant. The poor girl was much ridiculed for her religion by the young ladies, but did not render evil for evil; on the contrary, she would allow them to laugh at her

The eloquence of a holy life speaks in any land. After Mr. Peter had labored for a length of time at Balasore, a young Brahmin, named Jugunnat'ha, embraced the Gospel. Soon after, the brother of a native magistrate said to him, "Do you believe this from your heart?" Jugunnat'ha said, "Yes." "Well," said the other, "we are watching; you are making an experiment: if you live a holy life, we shall know that this Gospel is true. Padree-saheb has been preaching for three or four years; but we have our doubts, and cannot believe; none of the Ooriyas till now have embraced this religion; if you bear good fruit many will follow your example."

Well indeed said the blessed Savior, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is heaven." And do you not wish to promote this double object—the glory of God and the eternal welfare of man? This

and then mildly reason with them. She made it her study to be attentive and useful to them; took opportunities to speak to them about religion; and would offer to read the sacred Scriptures to them when they went to bed. They commonly fell asleep, and that in a little time, under the sound; but she was not discouraged. Having exemplified Christianity in her life, Providence sent a fever to remove her to a better state. The young ladies were not permitted to see her during her illness; but they heard of her behavior, which did not lessen the impression which her previous conduct had made upon them. Soon after, the two elder made a profession of religion: the little leaven spread; and now all the *nine* young ladies appear truly pious. Nor is religion, in this highly favored family, confined to them: other means were employed by God in producing this great change; but one of the two first who became serious, informed me that she chiefly ascribed it to the life and death of the servant-maid."

double object occupied on earth a Savior's hands, and in heaven engages that Savior's attention; this double object is the aim of those ministering spirits which are sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation, to diffuse happiness and holiness among beings destined to immortality, and to advance the honor of that God whom all the hosts of heaven adore. This is indeed a pursuit in which an archangel might delight to consume myriads of ages; and this in your sphere you may advance by the silent lessons of a holy example. In the epistle to the Philippians this subject is placed in a most important and striking light. "Holding forth the word of life." Preach the Gospel in your lives; preach it by your conduct, and thus hold forth the word of life to an undone world, as a light-house displays its light at the entrance of a harbor. A building of that description is designed to warn mariners of rocks or quicksands, and to show them a safe passage out of a stormy sea into a peaceful haven. Thus every Christian should stand, like a light-house on the edge of the ocean, to show all around him how they may escape the storm of eternal wrath, and where they may find a haven of repose; in other words, by a blameless life to teach mankind that this is happiness, holiness, and life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

Important situation! Who that feels one spark of love to God, or love to man, but must be anxious to accomplish heaven's benevolent design? and, saved himself, to be the means of saving others? Indeed, so powerful, so effective is Christian example, that it seems reasonable to believe, if individuals and nations that have professed the Gospel had universally adorn-

ed the Gospel, the whole world must long since have been brought to bow to the sceptre of the cross.

§ 7. The motives hitherto adduced for a devout attention to holiness have been chiefly of a pleasing description; but there are others of another kind, which ought not to be entirely unnoticed. If holiness is not your pursuit, you have no evidence that you enjoy God's grace: you have evidence, that in your present state you cannot enter his kingdom. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." However fair your profession, however splendid your gifts, however extensive your knowledge, without holiness you are like a lifeless corpse, that has the human form, but wants the soul; or like a whitened sepulchre, fair without, but within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. To such the Son of God declares, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

§ 8. Without holiness you would act the part of the worst of traitors to the Son of God. When Judas betrayed him, he professed affection and friendship, and kissed him, and said, "Hail, Master!" while he pointed him out as the prey of cruelty and scorn. The inconsistent professor of the Gospel really imitates Judas. He hails Christ as his Master and Savior, while he exposes the cause of Christ to contempt and reproach

by his ungodly life. In the world, religion is scorned through him; in his own family, it is hated through him. The world and his family think, If this is religion, we are as well or better without it. Satan injured Christ, but Judas must help him. So Satan opposes the progress of the Gospel, and injures the religion of Jesus; but other Judases must help him now, or he would labor in vain to throw a shade over the bright glories of Christianity. He leads these insincere or careless professors of the Gospel into dishonesty, or lying, or drunkenness, or some other crime; and then an outcry is raised against the religion of Jesus, through their wickedness, that are really strangers to religion and traitors to the Lord Jesus Christ. How terrific a description of any that have professed subjection to Jesus! ENEMIES TO THE CROSS OF CHRIST. The cross—God's grand instrument of saving mercy. The cross of Christ—where shines the brightest display of heavenly love. The cross of Christ—man's only refuge; the sinner's only hope. The cross of Christ—the means by which that blessed sufferer would subdue the world; and these, even while they profess subjection to his sway, enemies to his cross. Dreadful character!

§ 9. Without holiness you would rob God of his right, and violate your own most solemn engagements. You are not your own; but God claims your services, your love, your life; yet to be inattentive to holiness, is to deny him all he claims. It is a great crime to rob a man of his property, but it is a far more atrocious one to rob God of his glory; and not merely to rob him of his right, but to blacken the villany by giving to the world, and sin, and Satan, the time, talents, and

obedience which God claims. And all this wickedness is, in a professor of religion, rendered still more wicked, because it is connected with the violation of the most solemn engagements. Is not that man thought a poor, perjured wretch, who swears allegiance to his country and king, and then deserts and fights against both? Is he not deemed still more vile, if to perjury and desertion he adds treachery; and while he acts as his country's enemy, wears her colors, and professes to be a friend? Such, or a still more wretched and wicked being is he who professes the Gospel, and slights the holiness by which it is adorned. He, who, perjured by the violation of all his solemn engagements to God, has deserted his station, and is treacherously serving the devil while he professes to fight under the banners of Jesus.

§ 10. Without holiness you would contribute to defeat the benevolent labors of others, and render injury to the church of Christ as real as that offered by the most bitter persecutors. Suppose you knew a profane scoffer that made it his business to counteract the zealous labors of some faithful minister, would you not think him a miserable and dreadful instance of human depravity? would you not tremble at the prospect of his impending destruction? Ah, my friend! ministers of the Gospel have worse enemies than profane scoffers. Unholy professors much more effectually defeat their labors than all the scoffers upon earth. When those who are strangers to the power of the Gospel behold its professors as careless, as slanderous, as fond of worldly vanity, as resentful, or as covetous and worldly-minded, as themselves; when they see little or no difference, in conduct, disposition, and temper, be-

tween a professor of religion and moral persons who profess it not, they infer that religion is an empty name. And when they see conduct openly flagrant in its professed disciples, they infer that all professors are alike, and that all profession of religion is hypocrisy. It is true this is an unjust inference, but it is a common one; and they who give occasion for it, more effectually than scoffers or infidels, hinder men from embracing the Gospel of salvation; and doing so, they act the same part as the most bitter persecutors. At what did they in reality aim, but to support paganism or antichrist, and to keep mankind from the true way of life and peace? For what end but this were their dungeons, their racks and flames *occasionally* employed? And this end the inconsistent professor of religion, by his unholy deportment, *daily* promotes. Some who have begun to seek the way of peace, disgusted by his conduct, give up the pursuit; and he quenches in their hearts the little spark of grace, occasions them to resist the Holy Spirit, contributes to their damnation, and becomes a partaker of their sins. Others, always careless from the same cause, are sealed up under carelessness and impenitence of heart.

§ 11. While leading a careless or unholy life, the inconsistent professor of religion really imitates the devil, upholds his kingdom, and most effectually does him service. He imitates Satan. That enemy of God and man, it is said, can appear as an angel of light; but he is a devil still. So he who professes religion while he does not practice it, may appear in his conversation a child of God; but he is still a child of Satan. He upholds the kingdom of the wicked one. Satan endeavors to uphold that kingdom by prevent-

ing men from discerning the worth and excellency of the Gospel. The holy Scriptures declare this. Who so successfully hinder mankind from discerning the real nature of religion as its unholy professors? Religion, as exhibited in the lives of some of its faithful followers, is a fair and beautiful form, adorned with graces so divine and heavenly, that it is sufficiently powerful, if not to captivate every heart, yet to extort respect and admiration even from its foes; but the religion of an unholy professor of the Gospel, when seen, like a hideous monster, excites abhorrence and disgust; and mankind are ready to exclaim, If this is religion, we are better without it. Thus are they hindered from discerning its heavenly excellences; and taking a monster for it, are prevented from seeing its eternal worth. The unholy man or woman that occasions this mischief, is indeed one of the most faithful servants of the wicked one. The profligate cannot so effectually serve Satan as the hypocrite. The profligate is like an enemy without the walls of a fortress; he appears in his true colors, and men are aware of him; but the unholy professor is like a treacherous wretch that has crept into the fortress only to betray it. A drunkard, a dishonest man, a liar, a miser, out of the church of Christ, can never render Satan half the service they can render him when within its walls.

§ 12. If you profess religion and neglect holiness, you may be a source of mischief and misery for ages and ages. It is impossible to tell where the evil of a sinful example, or even of one sinful action, may terminate One open crime, and much more an unholy life, in a professor of religion, may be a means of

propagating vice and misery, and dealing to many death and damnation for generations to come. How easily may this be the case when a young person is influenced by such causes to neglect the Savior. The impressions he felt are destroyed, his desires are quenched, and his soul is undone. But he, perhaps, becomes the head of a family. Had he followed Jesus, his children would have been trained up for God; but now their eternal welfare is slighted, and they rise up heathen, like their father. Perhaps the same course of irreligion and vice is acted over again by their descendants, and again by theirs, each new generation copying the example of the former. This is not uncommon. Thus sin and misery are propagated from age to age. And that professor of the Gospel who, by his crimes, prevented the ancestor of such a family from following the Savior, is in an awful degree a cause of all this sin and misery! Ah, how watchful should a Christian be, that no one at the judgment-bar may be able to stand forth and say, "My ruin is owing to that sin, by which you wounded your friends and disgraced your profession; but for that I should have sought the Savior; through that I pronounced religion hypocrisy, and neglectful of it, lived and died."

§ 13. Neglecting holiness, you expose others and yourself to that awful wo which the Lord has denounced against those who slight his Gospel on account of the sins of others, and against those who are the cause of this neglect. "Wo unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh." Let the unholy professor of religion tremble at this heavy wo, denounced by such gentle lips!—this

wo which, heavier than a mill-stone round the neck, will sink him in a direful ocean of eternal wrath. O, let the unholy professor of the Gospel meditate terror, while he meditates on these words, "Wo unto *that* man by whom the offence cometh."

§ 14. Such are a few of those awfully momentous motives that urge the Christian to make advancing holiness his fervent desire, his incessant pursuit, his daily prayer. If you would improve life's little span; if you would glorify God and honor Christ; if you would recommend religion to mankind, and lead them to the abodes of bliss, you must follow after consistent holiness. Without it, the more zeal you display for the Gospel, the more mischief will you do. If you would not be shut out of heaven; if you would not be another Judas, another traitor to the blessed Savior; if you would not defeat the labors of Gospel ministers, more effectually than is done by bitter persecutors; if you would not rob God of his right; if you would not lie to God, and become a poor perjured wretch; if you would not uphold the kingdom of the devil, carry on his designs, and be his most faithful servant; if you would not contribute to spread sin, and misery, and damnation for ages to come; if you would not expose others, and yourself, to one of the most tremendous woes ever denounced from heaven against sin and sinners; if you would not commit all these hideous sins; if you would not do all this complicated mischief; in short, if you would not be a pest to earth, an enemy to the cross of Christ, a friend of the devil, an agent of hell, and a curse to yourself, you must follow after holiness.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE MORTIFICATION OF SIN.

§ 1 Were man what Adam was, what angels are, or what the spirits of the just will be, holiness would cost no pains, and require no labors. But during the present state, so much corruption works within, that the daily mortification of sin is essential to growth in grace.

The Scriptures contain many impressive admonitions respecting this duty. "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us." "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." "Abhor that which is evil." "As strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

That inbred corruption, which is the fruitful parent of all man's actual transgressions, is described in the Bible as "the old man." Not as something light and trifling which attaches itself to man, but as that which is so incorporated with his fallen nature that it becomes as it were "the man." It is represented also as the body of sin, in which all sins are united, as all the members of man are in a human body.

Freed by divine grace from the "dominion" of sin, the Christian is not freed from its more open assaults or secret guile. It is like an enemy defeated, and trodden under foot, yet not dead; still possessed of life, and only wanting an opportunity to rise again, and ready then to act with vigor. Or like an enemy nailed to a

cross, that if not kept there till his strength is exhausted and life expires, may live again, and be a worse enemy than ever. Hence the important admonitions, to mortify sin, to mortify the deeds of the body. The sense of the original word is, to kill, to destroy. It contains therefore a direction, to aim at the utter destruction of sin. The Scriptures do not, however, represent this enemy as soon dead. Our old man is crucified. Crucifixion was a lingering death. So sin does not die at once. Long will it linger; perhaps seem dead, then show again that life is not gone; then seem expiring, yet not expire. To the cross must it still be fastened, and wound after wound be inflicted on it, and never should it be presumed to be quite dead till it dies finally, and dies eternally.

§ 2. If you would live to God, you must mortify sin. Aim not merely at avoiding sin in your outward conduct, but seek and pray to kill the root of it in your heart. That you may do this, cherish self-acquaintance. Watch the motions of your own heart. If a stranger to yourself, sin cannot be mortified; however it may be checked in your outward conduct, it will reign and triumph in your heart. Pride will be filling you with self-conceit and self-importance. Self-love will promote covetousness, and make you indifferent to the miseries of others. It will pollute your motives; and when God's glory is the ostensible object, your own praise will be the true, though hidden spring of action. When afflicted, you will be disposed to murmur. When others are more prosperous or applauded than you, instead of rejoicing in their happiness you will be disposed to envy them. All this is the effect of sin that lies unmortified, and perhaps hidden, in the heart.

Hence, too, you will be studying for this world, when you should be meditating on a better; and planning for earth, when you should be reaching after heaven. The natural effect of all this is a cold, heartless, barren form of religion, where the life, and soul, and vital heat are wanting. This cannot be avoided unless you mortify sin, nor can sin be mortified without self-acquaintance.

To mortify sin, it is necessary that you have a deep impression of the evil of those innumerable sins, the sins of the heart. These are hidden from the eye of man. Human laws take no cognizance of them; but the great Searcher of hearts looks upon them with the same abhorrence as on finished crimes. Sin in the seed, in the bud, the blade, or the ear, is in his sight equally hateful. For as it is said, "Sin aims always at the utmost; every time it rises up to tempt or entice, might it have its own course, it would go out to the utmost sin in that kind. Every unclean thought or glance would be adultery, if it could; every covetous desire would be oppression; every thought of unbelief would be atheism, might it grow to its head."*

The sacred Scriptures represent those sins which lie hidden in the heart, as incurring guilt and condemnation of the same description as the crimes to which they would lead. Thus the Judge of all declares, that a lustful thought cherished in the mind, incurs the guilt of adultery. "I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." The indulgence of a resentful disposition incurs the guilt of murder. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer,

* Owen.

and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

On the same principle, he who meditates a dishonest action, is, in God's esteem, a thief; he who lets his vain mind dwell with pleasure on scenes of revelry, debauchery, and intoxication, stands chargeable in his Maker's sight with all those crimes. And they whose thoughts are occupied with vanity, excess, and pleasure, are, in the sight of God, guilty of the crimes and follies they would commit if their situation placed these things within their power. Would you therefore mortify sin, view it as exceeding sinful; and remember that a sinful disposition indulged, as to guilt, is equivalent to the guilt of committing the sin to which that disposition would lead. O, what myriads of millions of crimes are thus committed in the chambers of the mind and heart, those scenes of iniquity! crimes, hidden from every human eye, beneath impenetrable shades, yet all of them glaring with hideous horror before the face of eternal Majesty, as clearly as in the blaze of day.

§ 3. In mortifying sin, it is of unspeakable importance to observe that sin be *really mortified;* not merely diverted to some other object, or permitted to flow in some new channel. It is to be apprehended that the supposition that sin is mortified, when only diverted to a new object, is a frequent cause of ruinous deception. Thus, perhaps, the reigning sin of a man has been prodigality; he lays this sin aside, and ceases to be a spendthrift; but he takes up covetousness, and becomes a miser. Perhaps he has been covetous, he forsakes his avaricious ways, he is no longer the slave of avarice; he becomes liberal, but he becomes the slave

of ostentation. Another has been a profligate, proud of his drunken feats; he forsakes profligacy, frequents the house of prayer, and leads a life of regularity; but he is now as proud of his fancied virtues. Another has been a leader in a tavern club; he forsakes his former haunts and associates, and professes religion; but knows no ease, and allows no quiet, unless he can be a leader in the Christian church. Who does not see that in all these, and ten thousand such cases, sin is not mortified? Ruling iniquity still rules. The man is still its slave. The stream of iniquity is not lessened, but flows in another channel.

Another fatal mistake on this subject is, that of supposing sin mortified, when it is merely forsaken, through a change in our circumstances and situations. The flight of time produces many such changes. The faults and mischievous tricks of childhood give place to youthful lusts. These, in more advanced life, are in a degree forsaken for the sins of age. Yet sin is not mortified; it is merely adapting itself to the situations of its servants. The system of delusion goes on even to the day of death, and many die beneath its dreadful influence. How often, when visiting persons on the confines of the grave, of whose conversion I had not the slightest hope, have I heard them profess that they gave up the world; when the fact was, that they felt they could keep it no longer, and the world gave up them. Time changes man; but unless he be changed by a mightier than time, sin rules from the days of sprightly childhood to the last moments of feeble age.

As you value your eternal welfare, guard against delusions, by which myriads are undone. If there be one bosom lust that you would suffer to live, that one will

kill your soul. If you have a true hatred for *any* sin, you will indulge hatred against *every* sin; and if you would willingly spare one, it shows you not sincere in the destruction of any. Should you aim at the destruction of every sin but one, in cherishing that one you would as truly trample under foot the authority of God, as if you cherished all; as truly defeat the end, as to yourself, of the Redeemer's death. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Remember, the blood of Christ was shed as much to atone for the secret sins of your heart, as for the more open transgressions of your life. Only the blood of the Son of God can wash away the stain of your least offence against the Majesty on high; and shall any sin be small in your esteem, when for the least that precious blood was shed? If you are indeed his follower, you will spare no sin.

§ 4. To mortify sin, watch more especially against those sins to which your circumstances or age may peculiarly expose you. As the constitutions and situations of mankind vary, so do their sinful propensities. Hence the admonition to lay aside the sin which doth so EASILY BESET US. Consider what, in your unconverted state, were the sins to which your disposition most prompted you; and watch peculiarly against those sins. Some are peculiarly prone to pride, others to passion; some to sullenness and obstinacy, others to fiery resentment; some to envy, others to ambition and the love of glory; in other words, of worldly applause; others to love of worldly pleasure; some to strife, others to scandal and backbiting; some to here-

sies, others to drunkenness and lewdness; some to covetousness, others to prodigality; some to sloth, others, that are free from grosser crimes, to mere levity and folly. A cheerful disposition will be more liable to such sins as excessive levity, love of pleasure, and passion; a melancholy one to sullenness, to revenge, when brooding over imagined wrongs; to discontent, when destitute of desired advantages. Are you rich? you will be tempted to extravagance; and under the delusive idea of living conformably to your rank, will be tempted to squander in self-gratification or idle show, what would feed the hungry, clothe the naked, bring the blessing of multitudes ready to perish upon you, and if employed in diffusing divine knowledge, would spread it far and wide. *Are you rich? you will, if professedly liberal, be tempted to confine your liberality within such narrow bounds, that your donations to relieve the miseries of man, or assist the cause of God, will be really pitiful, paltry things, compared with the widow's mite, or the poor man's penny.* Are you rich? you will, if you have a family, be tempted to hoard so liberally for them, that you will probably, in the end, curse them with love to the world, with alienation from God, with a disposition to be the slaves of fashion, and the associates of the gay, however wicked or worldly; and thus, in the end, will undo them for eternity. Probably not one rich man in ten thousand improves that important talent, wealth, as at the judgment bar he will wish to have employed it. Few indeed are our Reynoldses and our Thorntons. Are you poor? your situation will tempt you to discontent, to repine and murmur at your own humble lot, to envy and reproach those in more favored circumstances. Are

you young? you will be tempted to self-conceit; to slight the counsels of age and experience, of valuable friends or tender relatives, through the pride of your own foolish and wicked heart. You will be tempted to indulge in youthful lusts; to form friendships, or a more lasting union, with such as charm your ungoverned fancy, though they may be strangers to the grace of God, and the children of the wicked one. Are you in the last stage of life? you will be tempted to indulge unreasonable prejudices; to censure, without reason, the wisest and most benevolent plans, because they differ from what you saw in youth; to murmur beneath the infirmities of advancing age, and to grasp, with a tighter embrace, the world that is departing from you for ever. As in a journey through a wilderness, if you expected the assaults of tigers, you would particularly observe every bush where they could lie prepared for their fatal spring; if you feared the bite of serpents, you would observe the herbage in which the enemy might lie across your way; if you dreaded a fall from some hidden precipice, you would watch every step you made: so in the journey of life, guard peculiarly, in its different stages, against the dangers incident to that stage; and mortify the sin which may most easily beset you.

§ 5. If you would mortify sin, consider its *deceitfulness*, and guard against deception. We read of those who are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; and God himself represents the sinful heart as not only desperately wicked, but "deceitful above all things." Sin deceives millions of the victims which it ruins. Many are the modes in which this system of deception is conducted. Virtue is stigmatized as vice, and

vice is extolled as virtue. A formal nominal Christian, with a heart as cold as Nova Zembla's eternal ice, is deemed a rational Christian; and a zealous, warm-hearted disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ is pronounced an enthusiast or a fanatic. Soft names are affixed to odious crimes. An abandoned whoremonger, or a profligate seducer, with the falsehood of Satan on his lips, is called a man of pleasure. A man, so full of infernal pride that he would risk his own life, or take his fellow-man's, for an offensive word, is deemed a man of honor. Revenge assumes the name of justice. Flattery is termed courtesy. Covetousness cloaks itself under the name of frugality; and while adopting for its golden maxim the hackneyed remark, that "charity begins at home," takes care that it shall *end* there too. Atheism and infidelity are free thinking or free inquiry. Thus the darkest crimes which men commit are softened down, and represented as pleasing or honorable, by some specious and delusive name.

§ 6. While thus called to duties so eternally important, and yet so difficult, lean not upon a human arm. Trust not in your own ability or might. No inherent power of yours will ever accomplish the momentous work of mortifying sin. The Scriptures direct your view to a mightier agent; to the Spirit of God. "If ye, THROUGH THE SPIRIT, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." As the Holy Spirit is the source of peace, and hope, and joy, and love, so by his influence and aid sin must be subdued and destroyed.

Look therefore to him who sanctifies, renews, gives the disposition, and carries on, till death, the work of grace. O, look to him for heavenly influence, to strike at the very root of sin! Let mortification of this evil

engage your labor; yet still depend upon the Holy Spirit's aid, and go forward, trusting in his might.

§ 7. To impress your mind most deeply with a hatred of sin, and with the necessity of mortifying this horrid evil, indulge such views as these of its unspeakable *malignity.**

It is infinitely hateful. Sin is "the only object of God's infinite hatred." God is love. He loves his Son, his angels, his children. His love, like the sun shining in its strength, diffuses good through his immense dominions; but sin is the object of his infinite abhorrence. A sinful word, or a sinful thought, has in it that evil against which God's infinite hatred and indignation are directed.

Sin is more hateful than the most hateful "fiend in hell—than even the devil himself." For sin made Satan what he is. But for sin the dark fiends of hell had been angels of light, but for sin Satan himself had been a child of God. Had there been no sin, there would have been no devil; had there been no sin, there would have been no hell. Could an infernal spirit appear to you, glaring with hideous wo and hellish dispositions, what alarm would seize you! if power to flee remained, how would you flee from the horrid being! Flee then from sin, the parent of devils and the author of hell.

Sin is most polluting. Could Satan be cleansed from the pollution of sin, he would no longer be a devil. Could his fallen legions be cleansed from sin, instead of miserable fiends they would become happy angels. Could souls enduring the miseries of damnation be

* On the malignity of sin, several thoughts are borrowed from Robert Bolton.

freed from its pollution, they would pass from the blackness of eternal night to scenes of peace, and joy, and love. Sin made them wretched, and its polluting stains, eternally upon their souls, will make them eternally hateful, eternally wretched.

Sin is most infectious. Like a contagious pestilence, it pollutes and destroys all it touches. All within the reach of its infection die. The first sin polluted all the sons and daughters of Adam, from the hour when he sinned in paradise, to that when time shall be no more. Think of the mighty multitudes that have lived on earth since that time began. Think of the swarming millions that now people the earth—perhaps a thousand millions of immortal beings. Think how soon these must be swept into the grave, and give place to other generations, and these again to others. And then, if you can, estimate the malignity of one sin's infection—that infection which has spread a deadly poison through the veins of generation after generation, for six thousand years; which has defiled them to such a degree, that man is altogether corrupt and depraved; which has ruined them so completely, that it has made them all the heirs of death, and dug a grave for all mankind. While such is the effect of one sin, who can describe sin's malignity, or estimate its evil? By one sin was the whole race of man rendered corrupt and wretched. By one sin all this lower creation was made subject to vanity. And now, if but one sin lie lurking in the heart, unpardoned and unrepented of, it pollutes all man's words, affections, thoughts, and actions; blasts all his knowledge and privileges, kills all his hopes, and damns his soul.

Sin is full of effects most fearful, most dreadful. It

deprives the "soul of God's favor, of all part and portion in the blood of Christ," a blessing worth more than a thousand worlds; of the kind protection and paternal care of the Most High; "of the glorious guard of angels," the comfortable communion of saints, and the sweet delights those blessings yield, "of the quiet joy and tranquillity of a good conscience," a jewel worth far more than a world: of all the heavenly illuminations and comforts by which the Holy Ghost visits and refreshes the hearts of holy men; of all calm delight and true satisfaction in this life; and stretching forward its malignant influence, it deprives the deathless soul of the crown of life; of the unspeakable joys of heaven; of that immeasurable and endless bliss that patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs enjoy in the presence of God and the Lamb.

While sin indulged thus robs the soul of peace, and happiness, and heaven, it loads it with ills immense and eternal. It subjects it "to blindness of mind, hardness of heart, horror of conscience," estrangement from God, and bondage to Satan; to fear, uneasiness, and restlessness in life; to doubt and terror in the day of death; to banishment from God, the source of happiness. It loads it with remorse that will last for ever; with guilt that will occasion eternal torments and eternal despair. It kills the soul with the death that never dies; for none can take the life of the soul away, though millions make it an accursed, wretched thing. O, dreadful cruelty! for man to murder with such a death his own soul; and to make it die eternally! What must it be to die for ever; to suffer the pangs of death today, only as a prelude to suffering them to-morrow? What must it be to die from morning till night, and

from night till morning; to die through days, and years, and centuries, and thus to spend eternity in dying?

Sin is so vile that it can never be pardoned or washed away but by the blood of the Son of God. "Had all the dust of the earth been turned into silver, and the stones into pearls; should the boundless sea have streamed with nothing but liquid gold," all would not have been a sufficient ransom for one sinful soul. Should all the creatures of the earth, and all the angels of heaven, have offered themselves as a sacrifice to divine justice, all could not have expiated one sin, or atoned for one transgression. Or had the Son of God himself sought man's happiness by supplication only, there is no reason for supposing he could have been heard. He must suffer, or man eternally must die. And shall not the heart's blood of the Son of God, shed for sin, fill you with eternal abhorrence of that which murdered him on Calvary, and which, but for his death, would have murdered your soul with everlasting destruction?

Sin is unspeakably hateful and loathsome, because it is committed against God. It offends the blessed majesty of heaven, insults the Father, wounds the Son, and grieves the Spirit. Had it power according to its nature, it would dethrone the Eternal, and strip him of his majesty and blessedness. O, how hellish is that evil which thus lifts its hand against the King eternal, immortal, and invisible! What has not God done to bless you! From the void of non-existence he called you into being; formed a charming world for your reception here, and bade the sun shine and the seasons revolve. How numberless have been his mercies! mer-

cies of every varied kind. The seeing eye, the hearing ear, the speaking tongue, the active limb; days and years of health, nights of peace and ease; the sprightliness of youth, the vigor of maturer life; the pulse still beating, the heart still playing, the functions of all going forward without any care of yours; food to support you every day of every year, and friends to cheer life every day. Not one blessing deserved, yet millions given to bless this transient life; and all given by God. Nor has he stopped here: higher mercies, nobler gifts claim attention. He has given you an immortal soul, with all its noble and deathless powers; the word of life, to show the path to immortality; hundreds of gracious promises and salutary precepts; his Son to die in your place, and by his miseries to secure endless bliss for you; his Spirit to instruct, to enlighten, to sanctify, and fit the soul for heaven. All this he has done; and if more be wanting, all that is wanting he engages to do. Now think of sin, which you have indulged in your heart. It insults this blessed God, it offends him; as far as it can it injures him, it disorders his work, confuses what he made harmonious, darkens what he formed bright, renders hateful what he created lovely; it abuses his mercies, it tramples his laws under foot, it does despite to the Spirit of his grace; and had it power, as sure as it is sin, would hurl him from his throne. Such is sin. Will you cherish this monster of wickedness? Can you think without horror of rebelling against so good, so great a Benefactor? Can you bear the thought of burdening your soul with such hellish ingratitude? Can you think of indulging in what God hates and the devil loves? Surely you cannot. Then hate sin: mortify sin, the enemy of God,

the enemy of Christ, the enemy of angels, the enemy of man, and the worst enemy of your immortal soul.

Consider again, that sin, in all so hateful, is in you more hateful. Is not God your God? is he not your Father, the God of your choice, the object of your hopes? have not you chosen him as your portion? have not you in private and public avowed this choice? have not you professed to yield him your heart, and to surrender to him all you are? You were once a prodigal; but have not you come back into your Father's family, and found an open door, a gracious welcome, and a Father's love? Is not the Son of God your Savior? Did not he shed his blood to wash your stains away? and have not you confessed before him, that "love so amazing, so divine," not merely demanded, but should have your "life, your soul, your all?" Are not you indebted to him for all your hopes, for peace and pardon? Is not the Spirit of God your Sanctifier? Are not you indebted to his gracious illuminations for all your comforts, and for all your knowledge of God and the Lamb? for a disposition to walk in the way of peace? for a heart to flee to the Savior and his cross? By faith in Jesus, have not you acquired a title to a life above; and been introduced into the family of God? Have not you had your hopes strengthened, and sealed your solemn vows in the courts of your God, in the professions of your baptism, and at the table of your atoning Lord? O, my friend, who then shall describe the evil of willful sin in you? You would sin against the God of all these mercies, against your forgiving Father. You would sin against the solemn vows by which your soul is bound to him. You would sin against your crucified Savior; against his dying love;

against him to whom your soul is committed; against him who writes your name in the book of life; against him who lives to promote your happiness in heaven, as once he died for you on earth; against Jesus, your only hope, and whom you have engaged to serve and love. You, too, would sin against the blessed Spirit, who has sought your happiness, and been to you the source of numberless blessings. O, then, mortify sin—sin, which inflicts all these evils, and is connected with all this worse than satanic ingratitude.

When tempted to sin, compare the poor, short, vanishing delights of sensual pleasure, with the heaven of which sin would deprive, and the hell into which sin would plunge you. If going to plunge into sin, think of the wages it earns; and consider, if you fall into that sin, you fall into hell, unless God's grace should bring you to true repentance, and of this you have no certainty.

Remember, that to consent to the enticements of sin, is to be guilty of that height of folly which wants a name to express its greatness. It is as if you were to put into one scale of a balance the glory and favor of the eternal God, the rich joys of an eternal heaven, the life of your own eternal soul, and the precious blood of the Son of God; and in the other scale, some sensual pleasure, some worldly profit, or some fading vanity; and after deliberation and choice, let these sinful trifles outweigh in your esteem those vast and inestimable blessings. O, monstrous madness, and dreadful contempt of God, and the Savior, and heaven!

§ 8. Let your abhorrence and opposition of sin thus proceed from *Gospel motives*. Be not satisfied with resisting it merely through the fear of shame or hell

He who opposes it *only* from these, has no more grace than the highwayman, who would steal, but that he sees the gallows before him. Take away the sight of the gallows, and he will rob at ease; take away from many men the fear of hell, and they would sin at ease. But the Christian mortifies sin from nobler principles. With Joseph he can exclaim, "How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Above all things, the influence of the cross of Christ is fatal to sin. Look to the Lamb of God suffering there: contemplate the severity of those nameless agonies; the depth of that bitter humiliation; the sharpness of those outward and inward torments; and then exclaim, "Was this for my sin? For my transgressions did he groan and die? Were my iniquities his intolerable burden? Did my sin bring him from his Father's throne to the accursed cross and its ignominious sorrows? O! bitter were the fruits of sin when man lost paradise; dreadful were the effects of sin, when the world perished in a deluge, or when Sodom and Gomorrah were overwhelmed with the fires kindled by an angry God; but not so dreadful did sin appear, when Adam lost Eden, when all nations were drowned, or when Sodom burned, as when the Son of God hung on the cross, and for my transgressions expired. Before his cross let me renounce my dearest lusts, and by the influence of his cross mortify every corruption."

§ 9. Besides other motives for the mortification of sin, it is by no means an inconsiderable one, that *a single sin* may fix upon your character a stain, which on this side the grave will never be worn out. A pious minister observes, "I have been much affected with the following reflection: Though, if not greatly de-

ceived, I have had some degree of experimental acquaintance with Jesus Christ for almost forty years; though I have borne the ministerial character for upwards of twenty-five years; though I have been, perhaps, of some little use in the Church of God; and though I have had a greater share of esteem among religious people than I had any reason to expect; yet, after all, it is possible for me, in one single hour of temptation, to blast my character—to ruin my public usefulness, and to render my warmest Christian friends ashamed of owning me." An earthen vessel once cracked, though it may afterwards be used, will never again appear what it once was: so the character of a professor of religion, or a minister, once injured by any flagrant crime, into which unmortified sin may lead, has received a wound that will, probably, never be healed. In David's adultery, Hezekiah's ostentation, Peter's cowardice, falsehood, and perjury, it is too visible that even persons of eminent virtue may, if sin be not mortified, soon plunge deep in atrocious vices. And the same truth is taught in the blasted characters of many, once conspicuous for piety and usefulness, but, perhaps, by a single transgression so sunk that, however penitent, they never rose again. Think not, therefore, any Scriptural admonitions needless.

Permit me affectionately to caution you more minutely against some sins.

§ 10. *Falsehood.* Every thing, whether in *jest* or earnest, that is not consistent with the strictest truth. Lying is a sin of so shameful a nature, that an ingenuous mind, even if a stranger to converting grace, holds it in abhorrence; yet too often we see this dis-

graceful sin committed, or near approaches made to it, and this in many ways. How many lies are told in trade, and in other pursuits of human life. The buyer lies when he affirms an article is not worth its real value: the seller lies when he declares it worth more, and asserts that to be cheap which he knows to be dear. The seller lies when he declares that such a price is the very lowest, and almost immediately accepts a lower. The buyer lies when he declares that a certain price is the highest he will give, and presently gives a higher. The physician or the surgeon lies when he declares of his hopeless patient that his danger is small, and recovery almost certain. The servant lies when she declares that a master or mistress is out, whom she knows is at home. That they are not at home to the person who inquires, is a mere quibble, and lessens not the lie. The manufacturer lies when he promises to complete an order by a certain day, but knows that he is too busy to accomplish it, or from carelessness neglects to do so. Flatterers lie when they compliment persons as possessed of excellences, of which they do not really believe them possessors. Tattlers lie when they circulate as truth, tales and accounts whose truth or falsehood they have not investigated. Numberless lies are uttered by persons professing to relate narratives of facts, but which, through carelessness, inattention, or love of the marvelous, they embellish with additions of circumstances that never took place. Many parents and persons intrusted with children often lie, when endeavoring to persuade children to comply with what they dislike, or in declaring they will punish them, though they have no

such intention. In these and other ways, almost innumerable, is this hateful sin committed.

To impress your mind with the deepest abhorrence of this sin, consider *that it is hated by God.* "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord. These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue." The devil undid the world by a lie, and is peculiarly the father of lies and liars. "The serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die." "Ye are of your father the devil; when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." Lying is numbered with the worst sins; with fornication, adultery, murder, idolatry, and even hatred of God. And while liars are thus numbered with the most atrocious criminals, it is with dreadful emphasis declared, that they as it were, above all, shall be shut out of heaven, and endure eternal destruction. "ALL LIARS shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." What a dreadful emphasis do the words *all liars* bear! It is as if it were said that the damnation of every impenitent liar is so certain, that if it were possible, which yet it is not, for some of these other classes to be saved in their sins. yet that not one *liar* should. Let it be added on this subject, that quibbling or equivocation has in numberless instances all the guilt of falsehood.

§ 11. Another sin of awful prevalence is *scandal.* Perhaps no sin is so common; perhaps none committed with so little thought, or remembered with less remorse. It is a sin, not like some others, chiefly committed by the open slaves of the world and the wicked one; but, alas! frequently by those who profess to

follow the benevolent Savior, from whose lips not one word of scandal ever dropped. This sin is perpetrated in various ways. It is committed, not merely by the slanderer who fabricates falsehoods respecting his neighbor, but by them who circulate these falsehoods. A tale-bearer comes, and brings some plausible account to another's disgrace. It may be true, it may not; the slanderer seldom takes much pains to inquire, but spreads the report far and wide; and in doing so, gives publicity to the willful lie of an abandoned liar, and makes himself a partaker of that liar's crimes. If they to whom he relates this account respect him, this adds new weight to the scandal. They spread it farther still, and confirm the account by relating from whom they heard the odious tale. Thus a hundred or a thousand make themselves partakers in the guilt of the first lie, and of all the scandal that flows from the fabrication. But it is not merely when circulating falsehood, that the guilt of scandal is incurred: it is incurred to a dreadful extent by persons who circulate what may be substantially correct. The backbiter pleads in excuse for his mischievous conduct, "The account I give is true." It may be so; but it is not *all the truth*, or it is *truth misrepresented*, or it is *truth which he has no right to repeat.*

It is not *all* the truth. Perhaps a brother has fallen into sin. The slanderer hears of it, and away he goes, and, like a trusty messenger, bears the news through the whole circle of his acquaintance. It is true that the sin has been committed; but there are perhaps circumstances connected with it, which so far extenuate the guilt as to call for pity to the offender rather than the severity of censure. All these circumstances, however

the slanderer takes care to omit. Perhaps the offender fell the victim of a temptation so sudden and so strong, that, thus tempted, his slanderer would have fallen into crimes ten times as great; but of this the slanderer says nothing. Perhaps he has deeply and bitterly repented of his momentary error; but of this the backbiter too is silent. He tells not half the truth.

The backbiter pleads, "The account is true." Yes but it is truth misrepresented. Perhaps a Christian, provoked and irritated, has uttered some harsh and hasty expression respecting another Christian, whom in his cooler moments he esteems and loves. The backbiter hears it, and away he goes to the person against whom these harsh words were directed, and tells him what his friend has said: but he does not tell him that these words were merely uttered in an unguarded moment, and lamented or retracted almost as soon as spoken. All this, and every thing else which would show the harsh words not deserving of a moment's notice, he omits. He sows strife and discord, and leaves the persons to whom he bears his tales, to esteem a real friend a cool and deliberate enemy.

Or if all be true, he is still a backbiter; for it is truth which he has no business to repeat, and which he would not repeat in the hearing of the person concerned. The word of God by no means represents the guilt of scandal as consisting exclusively or principally in lying. Whether the statement be true or false, if it be calculated to injure the reputation or comfort of another, he who circulates it, except only in cases where duty requires the disclosure, is a backbiter. There are cases indeed, in which a disclosure of what is thus

known or heard becomes a duty. Thus, to disclose to a parent the misconduct of a child, may be of high importance. Regard to the honor of religion, and concern for the welfare of a fallen brother, frequently render it the duty of one member of a Christian church to disclose the criminal conduct of another: but such disclosure should not be made indiscriminately, but to some whose office it is to see that Christian discipline and order are regarded, and disorderly conduct is checked by due reproof. The common practice of spreading a brother's or a sister's shame, by telling his fault to any or every member of a Christian society, is a flagrant sin; *frequently far worse than the crime it discloses.* All the guilt of scandal and backbiting attaches to this shameful practice.

There is another common kind of scandal, in which less is said, but frequently more mischief done. The persons guilty of it are justly denominated "whisperers." By half sentences, sly insinuations, and affected silence, they disclose the malicious feelings of their hearts; and frequently convey ideas more false and unfavorable respecting the person they dislike, than would be suggested by the open slanderer.

It should be considered, that they who encourage tale-bearers by listening to them, really become partakers of their sins. Were slanderers universally spurned as unworthy of notice, who would be a slanderer? but when a tale-bearer's accounts are readily received, though he who hears them may not circulate them, yet by hearkening to them he inspires the slanderer with fresh confidence, and prepares him more readily to go and repeat them elsewhere.

One short rule well observed will save you from an

immense mass of sin: it is merely, *when you can say no good of any one, unless duty requires you to speak, say nothing.*

Backbiting is the source of innumerable evils. "A whisperer separateth chief friends." "The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds." "Where there is no tale-bearer the strife ceaseth." Individuals, families, and churches have been ruined by scandal. Wars have been kindled, nations desolated, and myriads murdered, through tale-bearing.

Backbiting is a sin which is ranked in the Scriptures with the most atrocious crimes. In the first chapter of the Romans, it is a conspicuous line in the dreadful picture of the wickedness of an apostate world. "Filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; WHISPERERS, BACKBITERS, haters of God."

Backbiting is a sin of a diabolical description. A Christian, when under the influence of religious feeling, can take no pleasure in hearing or in circulating evil. Where pleasure is found in hearing of iniquity, or in publishing a brother's shame, the heart must plainly be under the influence of malice, or envy, or resentment, or some disposition akin to that of devils, who take delight in sin. In the Epistle to Titus, aged women are cautioned against being false accusers. The original is more impressive—*not devils.* The passage may suggest, that none approach nearer the likeness of devils than backbiters; and none so like him as professors of religion that are backbiters. This infernal disposition of slanderers is frequently seen in the manner in which they attack persons most emi-

nent for piety and usefulness. Baxter was represented as a murderer, Doddridge as unjust and time-serving, Whitfield as all that was vile. Even their Lord was represented by slanderers as a glutton and drunkard. This infernal disposition still exists. There are professors of religion who will represent the principal agents in our Bible and Missionary Societies, who are sacrificing time, property, ease, and perhaps health and life, to the diffusion of religion, as designing, self-interested men, whose object is to filch some of the money that passes through their hands. Do not such persons show the disposition of him who was the accuser of Job? Is there not reason to warn them to be not—devils?

§ 12. Besides those sins of the tongue which have been mentioned, there is another against which the Christian should watch with peculiar care. It is *profaneness*. By this is not here meant the profaneness of the swearer or of the blasphemer, but the light and irreverent use of the name of God in common conversation, and more especially in professed devotion. It is indeed to be hoped, that of those who profess religion, few will profane that venerable name by such irreverent expressions as "Good God!" "O Lord!" "Lord have mercy on my soul!" and expressions like these, lightly uttered in common discourse. But how often in professed prayer, both public and private, and in singing, is that holy name profaned; when God is addressed with solemn sounds upon a thoughtless tongue.

This so common sin is a great sin, as it is a dreadful violation of the third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

§ 13. The immense multitude of sins which an un-

governed tongue commits, is a reason for watchful care. It has been truly observed, that "the tongue is a most convenient instrument of iniquity, always ready for use. The sins of the tongue are perpetrated with ease and delight, every day, and in every place where even a solitary individual can be found to listen. Hence transgressions of this kind are multiplied wonderfully. The thief steals, and the cheat defrauds, occasionally only; but the slanderer will slander every day." The formal worshipper will every day, and perhaps several times in the day, insult his God by the mockery of prayer. The careless singer frequently every Sabbath, and perhaps often in the week, mocks the Most High.

Above all is the importance of mortifying the sins of the tongue, inculcated in the awful description given in the word of God, of an ungoverned tongue. It is wilder than the most savage and murderous beasts. "For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind; but the tongue can no man tame." Nothing short of divine power can bring it into due subjection. It is venomous as the most venomous ser pent. "It is an unruly evil," evil as it were in its essence, "full of deadly poison." "The poison of asps is under their lips." It is like fire, when properly managed, highly beneficial; but when no longer under restraint, most terrible and destructive. *The tongue is a fire*, and not merely iniquitous, but a *world of iniquity*. "It defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." How awful a description! How awful the last idea in it! set on fire of hell. Hell inflames the reviler; instigates

the slanderer; prompts the liar. Dreadful thought! Let none imagine the daily and countless sins of the tongue inconsiderable sins; while poisonous as asps, they diffuse their deadly venom, and defile the whole body; and destructive as fire, kindled by hell itself, they destroy the immortal soul, and spread desolation, and misery, and wo.

§ 14. There is one sin, which it may be thought almost ridiculous to name, and which perhaps, for that very reason, has more need of being mentioned. It is the sin of consulting persons that profess to foretell future events. I have known persons weak enough, or *wicked enough* to fall into this. That it is weak, reasonable persons will allow; that it is wicked, the word of God declares.

§ 15. Another sin, often witnessed in some persons that profess religion, and by which they dreadfully disgrace their profession, is the sin of *contracting debts*, which they afterwards neglect to discharge. This is a sin which springs from many sources. Often from idleness, and neglect of the proper duties of a person's calling in life. At other times it springs from pride, and a desire indulged to figure away beyond what a small income will allow. Sometimes it springs from extravagance, and frequently from thoughtlessness. Persons contract debts without considering how unlikely it is that they shall be prepared for payment when the appointed time arrives. In all these cases, and in many others, it is a sin which not only ruins the credit of the guilty person, but if he profess religion, brings disgrace, in the view of an *undiscerning world*, on religion itself. This common and dishonorable practice is a *very* wicked one.

§ 16. Another sin, which it is to be feared has blasted the eternal hopes of many professed disciples of the Son of God, is *covetousness*. Covetousness is a sin confined to no peculiar age; for if it be allowed that it is frequently the ruling sin of old age, yet it is also often a sin of youth. It is confined to persons in no station; the poor and the rich are frequently alike covetous. Nor is it, like drunkenness and lewdness, found almost entirely among those who are destitute of the profession of religion; but it has been the curse and the ruin of many that have named the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is an insidious sin. The covetous man scarcely ever has any suspicion of his real character. He that robs knows that he is a robber; he that plunges into drunkenness, when reason returns, knows that he has been intoxicated; but he that indulges covetousness generally has no suspicion of his guilt and danger, but lives, and dies, and perishes in his delusion.

It leads to other most atrocious crimes. Balaam's covetousness made him desire to curse Israel, whom God blessed. Ahab's covetousness of Naboth's vineyard caused Naboth's murder and Ahab's destruction. Judas's covetousness led him to betray the Lord of Life, and thus to sell his gracious Master and damn his own soul for thirty pieces of silver. The single murders which robbers have committed, the *wholesale* murders which war has perpetrated, have been frequently the effect of covetousness. Fatal to individuals and nations, it is not less deadly to churches and families. A covetous minister of the Gospel is one of the worst of monsters. Good withers before him, as life and verdure before a pestilential blast. Demons might walk

beside him, and exult in viewing opening schemes of usefulness neglected, and opportunities of doing immortal good slighted, through the freezing influence of covetousness.

The peculiar vileness of covetousness is further seen *in its being a sin of the heart, and as such, diametrically opposed to all good.* It is not a transient crime, into which the person falls through strong temptation, but it is a disposition of his heart, by which, in effect, he prefers the creature to the Creator. As such, it is worse than the grossest crimes—worse than profaneness, worse than perjury, worse than even adultery. The Scriptures record mournful instances of men of piety that through strong temptation fell into these dreadful sins, but the Scriptures mention no instance of a child of God that was a covetous man. The covetous man belongs to the family of Balaam and of Judas. "Be not deceived: nor thieves, nor COVETOUS, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Awful and decisive declaration! Let not the covetous indulge so false a hope as the hope of reaching heaven.

Think not, however, that this sin is merely or chiefly that excessive avarice which has rendered a few noted misers eminently infamous. If this were the case, there would be less probability of being hardened and ruined by it. But the Lord Jesus represents conduct much less dark, much less miserly, as ruinous covetousness. Luke, 12 : 15–21. He does not describe the covetous man as a thorough miser, hoarding up his useless stores merely to gaze upon them; nor as a hard oppressor, who gains his riches by grinding the faces and keeping back the wages of the poor. He does not describe him as one who starves himself and

his family to increase his golden heap. His riches were given him by God's bounty; his fields brought forth plentifully. He showed his covetousness, not by the way of acquiring riches, not by gathering in the bounty of heaven, but by the use he made of them. *A mere selfish use.* Instead of promoting God's glory and man's happiness by his abundance, he proposed employing his riches in self-gratification, and God pronounced him a fool.

O learn, that not merely the miser, who hoards up his useless gold, not merely the oppressor, or the extortioner, whose gains are the fruits of cruelty and dishonesty, are in God's sight guilty of covetousness; but the honest tradesman, the moral youth, the amiable girl, who look no further than gratifying themselves with what they possess. According to their Maker's judgment they belong to the same class. *Take heed, therefore, and beware of covetousness;* of this more common, but not less ruinous covetousness.

§ 17. Closely connected with covetousness is *love of this world.* The sacred Scriptures represent the Savior's disciples as persons who have little concern with this world; whose chief business here should be to glorify God, and press forward to heaven. Jesus said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

How full, how impressive, are those words of the blessed Jesus, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." This world was no object of his

affection. He slighted its wealth, scorned its treasures, disregarding all its fading pursuits, and all its deceitful maxims. It had no charms for him; its terrors could not alarm, nor its allurements entice him. He acted in it as a stranger come to perform an important commission, and then to leave it for ever. Are you one of his disciples? This world is no more to be the object of your affections than it was of his.

This holy deadness to the present world is described impressively by the Apostle Paul; "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." Such was the influence of the cross of Christ upon his heart, that the world was crucified to him. It was as unlovely as a crucified malefactor in his view. All its charms were dead, all its attractions gone; and darkness, deformity and death lowered over its face. He was crucified to the world—he looked upon it with feelings similar to those of a person dying on a cross. How little interest would such a one take in the most interesting and affecting scenes of earth! All that is most engaging in nature might be spread around his cross, and busy multitudes be seen eagerly pursuing the concerns of life; but the crucified man would scarcely cast one glance from his dying eyes, on all the charms of nature or the bustle of life. All that is most charming would not tempt him; all that is most dreadful would not alarm him. If you are a follower of Jesus, you too must be crucified to the world, and the world to you. If a Christian indeed, your treasure and your home lie beyond the grave; and your heart and hopes are fixed on unfading blessings there.

As you would escape eternal death, as you desire

eternal life, watch against love to the world. It has been the ruin of millions. Beware of this rock. On it crowds, that once seemed setting out for heaven, have made shipwreck of faith and eternal hopes. The world is Satan's grand temptation. If that bait fail, he has none more alluring to present. The world was the last temptation by which he tried the Son of God: "All these things," said he, "will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." When that was rejected, he fled; he had no higher bribe to offer. Love to the world is the most fatal of sins. The Scriptures tell of some eminently pious men that fell deeply, but as bitterly repented; but not one child of God is described who was a lover of the world. For this is not merely a single sin, a casual fall, but a state of mind, a disposition of heart, connected with all that is opposed to God and goodness. This sin also is peculiarly dangerous, because it is peculiarly insidious. It steals into the heart and governs there, and yet deceives the slave it governs. It kills immortal hopes, it damns the immortal soul; and yet its wretched slave, perhaps, connects himself with a Christian church; professes the religion of Jesus; brings, it may be, no flagrant disgrace on his profession; but still lives and dies deceived. Were he to become a swearer or a drunkard, his friends would disown him, as dead to God. His crimes would stare him in the face, and conscience at last might take the alarm, and bid him flee from the wrath to come. But the lover of the world feels no such alarm. He stands as a member of the church of Christ, or perhaps sustains some office in it; or ascends the pulpit, and bids others flee from ruin; yet he is himself a child of hell, for he is a lover of the

world. O, my fellow-pilgrim, there is no religion in the heart while the world is loved. If any man, let his knowledge of divine truth be ever so extensive, let his profession be ever so strict, his zeal for orthodoxy ever so flaming, his character ever so amiable, and his standing in the Christian church ever so long, yet, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." All the forms of religion may be assumed, all open sins be renounced by him who yet remains a lover of the world. The drunkard may become sober, the lewd grow chaste, the liar true, the pilferer honest, the profane begin to reverence his Maker's name, the Sabbath-breaker frequent God's house, and the prayerless learn to pray, and yet this master sin, this treacherous vice, may lie hidden within. And the man who has undergone the change now described, may be as far from God, and perhaps even further, than when he drank in iniquity like water. Then he had some fears that his state was bad; now he thinks that all is right; and yet, because he loves the world, all is wrong.

Perhaps you inquire, How shall this secret evil be discerned? The mention of a few marks of it may assist self-examination.

Love to the world rules within, if, for the sake of profit, ease, or pleasure, you are kept back from accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord, your Savior, and your all. Jesus said, "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

Love to the world governs in your heart, if, through fear of loss, or injury, you persist in what you know to be sinful. If, for instance, there be in your trade or avocation any thing that you know is inconsistent

with religion, and yet, to avoid loss or secure gain, you persist in following this, by so doing you plainly show that you love the world more than God and your own soul; that you are no Christian. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

Common reason may further convince us, that love to the world is to be known by anxiety to acquire worldly good, and unwillingness to part with it. He that saves or toils for wealth, that, with what he acquires, he may feed the hungry, clothe the naked, support the cause of religion, and send the Gospel far and wide, shows in his industry no symptoms of love to the world; but he who pursues the same conduct, saves with the same care, and toils with the same assiduity, not to benefit mankind, but that he may heap up a little more for himself and his family; he who, though he may contribute his mite to benevolent objects, yet gives a contemptible trifle, compared with what he ought to give, and perhaps even that trifle with reluctance; he bears the fatal mark of having this plague upon his soul. His assiduity to get the world, and his care to keep what he acquires, demonstrate him a perishing lover of the world.

§ 18. This little volume would far exceed its designed limits, if as much notice were bestowed on every sin as has been on those just mentioned. Permit the writer however to add,

If you would mortify sin, *flee from the occasions* of sin. Be not bold in venturing into scenes of temptation. "Depart from evil, and do good." If you love the Lord, "hate evil." "Enter not into the path of the

wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." Multitudes confiding in their own strength, have gone into scenes of temptation; the consequence has been their present, and probably their eternal destruction. You are taught to pray, "Lead us not into temptation;" but he who willfully rushes into it has no reason to expect divine assistance to keep him from its danger; but rather to suppose that God will leave him to himself, to punish his sin and folly.

§ 19. It is not sufficient for the Christian who would honor his profession, to abstain from sin: he is commanded to "ABSTAIN FROM ALL APPEARANCE OF EVIL." So high does the morality of the Gospel rise, that it thus positively forbids, under the most awful sanctions, not only what is actually evil, but ALL that has even *the appearance of being so.* There are many things which are not positively sinful, but which have the appearance of evil. These are to be abstained from as carefully as sin itself. There are others, which the well informed Christian may be convinced are free from actual guilt, yet their appearance may be such that weaker brethren esteem them wicked. These, too, the Scriptures forbid. Think not that this point is of little importance. The appearance of evil may as effectually injure the cause of Christ and dishonor God, as evil itself. The mere appearance of evil, by throwing a stumbling-block in the way of others, may as effectually as evil itself harden men in sin, defeat the end for which Christ died, blast the labors of Gospel ministers, and ruin immortal souls.

CHAPTER IX.

ON HUMILITY, RESIGNATION, PATIENCE, AND CONTENTMENT.

§ 1. HUMILITY is a principal Christian grace. It is so essential to the Christian character, that without it religion cannot possibly exist; and to promote its growth and yield to its influence is a principal part of true wisdom.

Humility consists in entertaining those lowly views of ourselves which become dependent and mortal, corrupt and sinful creatures. It is to be manifested towards God in confessions of sin, in self-abasement and contrition, in lowly reverence, resignation, submission, patience, and contentment; and is to be displayed in our intercourse with mankind, not by the constant language of self-depreciation, but by meekness and gentleness; by esteeming others better than ourselves; by calmness, when slighted or insulted; by forbearance and forgiveness, when provoked or injured; by kindness, that stoops to the meanest objects of compassion; and by benevolence, that does good in secret, and blushes to find its actions applauded.

Humility is not a disposition naturally existing in the human heart. On the contrary, *pride* is the radical sin of human nature, and displays itself in a thousand forms. Multitudes are proud of their reasoning powers, of their fancied wisdom. Though in the world of nature mystery meets them at every step, they cavil at the word of God on account of what they deem mysterious. But humility sits at the feet of Jesus and learns of him.

Pride renders men impatient of reproof. The humble will receive with gratitude the faithful reproofs of Christian friends, but the proud resent the kind dealing of those who tell them their faults; they love their flatterers, and are ingenious in devising excuses for their guilt.

§ 2. *Pride in dress* is the ruling sin in many hearts, and is not confined to one age or to one sex. When this sin abounded in Israel, the great God threatened it with his judgments. Isa. 3: 16–18, 24. Think not that it is a matter of little importance. The Scripture direction to Christian females is, "That women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety: not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."

Pride is indulged in apparel, when our dress is too costly for our circumstances. It governs in the heart, when, instead of being content with Christian neatness and simplicity, persons are fond of displaying themselves in gay and gaudy attire; or when they suffer that to occupy their hearts, and for hours and hours engage their thoughts; when, like an infant, they are delighted at appearing in a new garment, or filling their minds with anticipations of the appearance they shall make.

One most injurious way in which pride in dress operates among the poor is, by inducing them to abstain from the house of God because they have not such clothes as they desire. If you who read this book are poor, and have acted this part, be assured it is pride, and only pride, that has occasioned this sinful neglect. Your prayers would not be less acceptable to God, nor

your soul less benefited in his house, because your garments were mean and decayed. There is nothing shameful in poverty that sin does not occasion, but there is much sin in slighting the interests of your immortal soul and neglecting the house of your God for want of better clothing. This wicked pride, that dwells in the hearts of so many of the poor, deprives them of the means of grace, keeps them from hearing the Gospel of salvation; if they once knew religion, renders them dead and indifferent to it; if they have not known it, prevents their obtaining the only true wisdom, and at last sinks them down to hell. O, what folly and sin, to neglect the salvation of an immortal soul because the clothes that cover the dying body are mean and poor! I have seen with pleasure a poor disciple of Jesus attend the house of God in tattered and worn-out garments when he possessed no better, and known such a one soon furnished, through Christian liberality, with more comfortable clothing; who, if he had indulged the pride that many cherish, might have continued at home, his body covered with rags, and his soul languishing, and religion dying, through neglect of the ordinances of God.

§ 3. Pride is hateful to God, and the proud are the objects of his wrath. "Every one that is proud in heart, is an abomination to the Lord." "The Lord hateth a proud look." "God resisteth the proud." It is the parent of strife; the fruitful source of quarrels, discords, dissensions, revenge, of the private murders of villains, and the wholesale murders of war. "ONLY by pride cometh contention." It is an uneasy passion, and the source of that devilish passion, *envy*, which looks with dissatisfaction on others' good; which

mourns their prosperity, if superior to its own; and would feel more satisfied to see them wretched when itself is afflicted, than to see them happy. Yet, infernal as is this passion, it is the sure attendant of pride; and if not visible in its greatest excesses, still will exist where pride rules.

Pride is hateful, as it is the parent of discontent with the dealings of God, and ingratitude for his mercies. On this subject one says, "I have trials by perplexities respecting the things of time; yet they seem needful; for they have shown me more of myself than I knew before. This day or two these discoveries have led me to enter into Wesley's words:

> 'God only knows the utmost hell
> 'Of the deceitful heart.'

I did not know mine. Instead of a submissive spirit, I feel that there is within me a disposition to murmur. Instead of humility and thankfulness for what I have, I can at times perceive a feeling rising, as if others who deserved less, were favored more—a hellish feeling, springing from that pride and self which I abhor, but feel clinging closely to my nature."

The dispositions which this writer lamented the proud man cherishes. When God chastises him, he is discontented, and perhaps murmurs, because he thinks he has not deserved the affliction. When the good he desires is withheld, he repines, because he thinks he deserves more, and receives less, than some others that he esteems more highly favored. I once knew a man who in affliction declared that the Lord was not merciful to him. He would say, "Can this be of love?" and assert that he could not love God, who so afflict-

ed him. He would declare that he had not deserved what he suffered; that there must be some mistake, and that he must be suffering for the sins of another. The discontent which pride breeds may not often be so openly expressed; but as seen by Him who searches the heart, and knows sin in the blade as well as in the ear, it is doubtless seen as a disposition of this infernal nature.

§ 4. Pride is cruel as death. Prompted by pride, ambition wades through seas of blood, and sees with unconcern myriads of victims slain, that it may obtain fame or power. Pride is not less cruel in private life. What sums of money are uselessly expended for the sake of glitter and show, that might feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and cheer many a broken heart! How many professors of religion are there that have nothing to impart to the afflicted, and contribute nothing, or next to nothing, to support and diffuse religion, because their pride leads them to spend every spare shilling upon themselves in dress! Their pride is cruel. How many wealthy professors of the Gospel spend scores or hundreds of pounds on vanities in their dress, their furniture, or their style of living, to make their fellow-worms esteem them respectable, while they give a *paltry* annual guinea to institutions that are laboring to diffuse the Gospel among six hundred millions of perishing and benighted men? Their pride is cruel. Were it not for this cruel pride among professors of the Gospel, how rich would be the funds of every benevolent institution! The silver and the gold would pour like copious streams into their treasuries; but pride and selfishness render them poor; pride, that gives a shilling where a guinea ought to be

given, and gives a guinea where a hundred or a thousand ought to be imparted.

Pride is false. How many lies are told through pride, by persons who have sinned, to shield themselves from shame and disgrace! They are not ashamed to sin, but they are ashamed to appear what they really are—the lovers of sin. How many lies are told by persons whose circumstances are depressed, that they may appear more wealthy than they really are! Pride is dishonest. How often do persons, for the sake of finer furniture and apparel than they can afford, contract debts which they cannot discharge! They are ashamed to appear in poor clothing, but they are not ashamed to obtain their neighbor's goods, and really to rob them of their property.

§ 5. The importance and value of humility is strongly enforced in the word of God. "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly." "He giveth grace unto the lowly." "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." "Be clothed with humility."

§ 6. The Lord Jesus was humble. He left a spotless pattern, that we should follow his steps; and of the glories that unite in that example, none shines brighter than humility. Before he appeared on earth he was in

the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but with condescension that has no parallel, he became a man, a man of poverty and wo. When he appeared on earth, he appeared not as the son of a monarch, but of a carpenter; and chose for a birth-place not a palace, but the stable of an inn. Unlike the proud, who think the employments of the lower ranks of mankind disgraceful, he most probably labored as a carpenter. When he commenced his public ministry, he invited not princes or philosophers to convey a message, which angels would be honored by conveying, but he chose for his apostles a few poor fishermen. With these he associated on terms so condescending, that he said, "I am among you as he that serveth." Unlike those who esteem poverty disgraceful, he was so poor, that when a trifle was demanded from him for tribute, he had to work a miracle to raise even to the value of half a crown for himself and a beloved disciple. Instead of sumptuous fare, he was contented with the plainest food, with small fishes and barley bread. No abode was too mean for him to enter; no office of kindness too humble for him to perform; no child of wretchedness too degraded for him to benefit. Though infinitely superior to the angels of heaven, no consequential behavior ever appeared in him; but the meanest of the mean was not below his kind attention. When the Samaritan woman, poor in circumstances and debased in character, found him sitting by Jacob's well, he freely conversed with the poor wanderer, unveiled the guilty secrets of her heart, and directed her into the way of life. When the centurion sent, beseeching him to heal his servant, with the hu-

mility which listens to every call of distress, he immediately replied, "I will come and heal him." When parents, anxious for their children's welfare, sought his blessing, unlike the self-important philosopher, who esteems such little ones beneath his notice, Jesus took them in his arms and blessed them. Despised as were the publicans, he readily allowed them to sit down with him and his disciples; and careless of the murmurs of the proud, said on one occasion to their chief, "Zaccheus, to-day I must abide at thy house." He preached the Gospel to the poor, and the common people heard him gladly; and unlike those who think the poor and illiterate of little importance, who value churches or congregations according to what they call respectability, he rejoiced that such were his disciples; and said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Though he might have assumed the loftiest title, he often chose the humblest; and spoke of himself under the lowly appellation of the Son of man. The love of fame has been pronounced the universal passion; but he whom angels praise, sought no praise. Instead of magnifying those works of mercy which deserved the admiration of the world, he spoke of them in the humblest terms. When about to raise the daughter of Jairus, he said, "Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." When going to raise Lazarus from the grave, he said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.' And when he healed the Gadarene demoniac, from whom he expelled a legion of devils, he would not permit such a monument to his praise to attend him from

city to city, but said, "Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee." So far was he from seeking applause, that instead of courting the fame his miracles would attract, he often charged those for whom these miracles were wrought, to tell no man of the benefit they had experienced. At other times he immediately left the place, as when he healed the lame man at the pool of Bethesda. On one occasion he took aside the sufferer whom he cured; and on another, when his help was solicited, immediately granted it when he saw a crowd assembling. How different from their conduct whose pride renders them uneasy when benevolent actions or labors are not noticed and applauded. Influenced by the same spirit, he sought not his own glory, but his that sent him; and said, "As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." No slights, no insults, disturbed the calmness of his soul. When not treated with common civility at the house of a Pharisee, who invited him to dine, he manifested no displeasure. When the Samaritans would not receive him, and his two disciples provoked at the insult, said, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Though the Author of Christianity, and the Lord of heaven and earth, he willingly permitted his unworthy disciples to excel himself in the splendor of their miracles and the fullness of their instructions. He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; be-

cause I go unto my Father." "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

O, think whose character you thus contemplate—whose humility you thus behold—his in whom every excellency met—spotless innocence and perfect holiness—yet he was humble. His possessions were heaven and earth—his dwelling-place eternity—his servants cherubim and seraphim—his Father, the King eternal, immortal, invisible, whom no man hath seen nor can see—his happiness the delights enjoyed in the bosom of the Father; yet he was humble; and when he came to earth, led a life of humility as consummate as his benevolence was boundless. And can you be his follower, and cherish pride? pride, which sprang up first in Satan's breast. Was he poor; and will you scorn the poor, or think it beneath you to enter the lowliest dwelling? Did he, when a man of poverty, labor for his daily support; and will you, a worm of the dust, look down with contempt upon a fellow-worm, because he does what Jesus, when incarnate did, earns his support by the labor of his hands? Did he make the pious poor his followers, and rejoice that such were his disciples; and will you look on piety itself as scarcely deserving notice if it be united with poverty? or think that piety in a fine house and costly apparel deserves a hundred times more attention than perhaps much superior piety in coarse clothes and a cottage? If these are your feelings, how different from those of him you perhaps call your Master. Were he on earth as poor as formerly, you would doubtless be ashamed of him.

It would shock your genteel feelings, to be the friend or associate of a journeyman carpenter, though

under that guise the Son of God were concealed. Yet, poor worm! of what have you to be proud? You, by nature a child of wrath, and by sin's desert an heir of hell! You, who must soon leave all your gay apparel, to assume the dress of the grave. You, who must soon say to corruption, "Thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and sister." Of what have you to be proud? Is it your property? God values it so little, that he gives it to millions of his enemies, but to few of his children. Is it your rich attire? does that add one grain to your real worth? Is it your beauty? it must soon be exchanged for deformity and rottenness: all of you that is mortal must soon be moldering dust or a ghastly skeleton. O! think: Jesus was humble, and angels are humble; only devils and fallen men are proud.

§ 7. If more than the example of that divine Friend is requisite to make you humble, think what you were; and this one thought, properly indulged, will be sufficient to destroy pride. You were a child of wrath, a slave of Satan, an enemy to God; in the view of God, a wretched creature, a malefactor, doomed to an eternal hell; and deservedly condemned to suffer there the death that never dies. You must acknowledge this, or overturn the whole Gospel, and set the grace of God altogether aside. Do you, with me, acknowledge this? then of what have we to be proud? Behold a poor wretch, whose crimes are bringing him to the gallows. He has deserved to die. The utmost that human justice can inflict upon him, is no more than he has merited. He has lost his friends, his character, his liberty, and deserved to lose them all; he is

about to lose his life, and if it be taken from him, all must acknowledge it is justly taken. Of what has that man to be proud? Let that man by an act of free mercy be pardoned, yet of what has he to be proud? If you are a Christian, you know that you were a lost sinner; that whatever your character may have been in the view of man, in the sight of God it was blasted by the atrocious wickedness of rebellion against him. Of what have you to be proud? You were a slave of the devil, and perhaps passed many years as his slave; can you think of this and be proud? Had God left you to yourself, you would have been a slave of the devil to this very hour; can you think of this and be proud? You delivered not yourself, it was God who translated you out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son. You did deserve hell, you were condemned to it; can you think of this and be proud? The most miserable wretch that was ever led to execution was never a hundredth part so guilty with respect to his fellow-creatures as we have been with respect to God; and the most miserable death which the most wicked criminal ever suffered, was not a thousandth part so dreadful as that eternal punishment which every sinner has deserved. Of what then have we to be proud?

§ 8. When you view yourself as a Christian, you may doubtless find much to deepen humility. Compare yourself with some other disciples of the Savior How much stronger has been their faith! What far brighter hopes have animated their souls! How much stronger has the flame of holy love burned in their breast! With how much closer imitation have they copied the holy Jesus? How much more have they honor-

ed God, glorified their Redeemer, and benefited their fellow-pilgrims! In short, how heavenly have been their affections, how holy their lives, and with how quick a progress have they been pressing on to heaven! View this, and sink low in humility. Perhaps, too, this has been the case of many who had few privileges and advantages like yours; who had less knowledge and fewer gifts, and whose natural talents were far below yours. See this, and sink still deeper in humility.

§ 9. Think what, as a Christian, you *should be.* How elevated is the Christian character, as described in the word of God! What holiness, meekness, gentleness, devotion, faith, love, peace, and joy should adorn the Christian! How much should the follower of Jesus on earth resemble the disciple of Jesus in heaven! But is not the likeness in yourself extremely imperfect? Have not you reason to lament numerous defects; to deplore the weakness of almost every grace, and to confess yourself still but a mere infant in religion? Is this the case, and should you not be clothed with humility, and appear robed in it in all your dealings with man, and all your intercourse with God?

Consider not what you are in the judgment of your fellow-creatures, but what you are in the judgment of the infinitely pure and holy God. What they call frailties, are in his sight great crimes. Place yourself as in his presence. Contrast the pollution of your nature with the infinite purity of his; your sinful heart with his unspotted holiness; your defective virtues with his unblemished excellences; your weak graces and imperfect services with those perfect glories that adorn his character, and with that perfection of purity and obedience which his law requires. As in the bright

beams of the noon-day sun, innumerable atoms, before unseen, become clearly visible, and are seen floating in the air; so, in the presence of Jehovah, innumerable defects, and faults, and sins, perhaps before unseen, become conspicuous in the view of the soul. Angels veil their faces in his presence, and saints the most exalted sink before him into the lowest depths of self-abasement. The eminently pious Doddridge, expressing his feelings not long before the close of a life of distinguished usefulness and activity, said, "My confidence is not that I have lived such or such a life, or served God in this or the other manner: I know of no prayer I ever offered, no service I ever performed, but there has been such a mixture of what was wrong in it, that instead of recommending me to the favor of God, I needed his pardon, through Christ, for the same. Yet I am full of confidence: and this is my confidence; there is a hope set before me: I have fled, I still fly for refuge to that hope."

Of Archbishop Usher it is related, that a friend urged him to write his thoughts on sanctification, which he engaged to do; but when the performance of his engagement was claimed, he replied to this effect: "I have not written, and yet I cannot charge myself with a breach of promise, for I began to write; but when I came to treat of the new creature which God formeth by his Spirit in every regenerate soul, I found so little of it wrought in myself, that I could speak of it only as parrots, or by rote, without the knowledge of what I might have expressed; and therefore I durst not presume to proceed any further upon it." His friend being amazed at such a confession from so eminently holy a person, he added, "I must tell you,

we do not well understand what sanctification and the new creature are. It is no less than for a man to be brought to an entire resignation of his own will to the will of God, and to live in the offering up of his soul continually in the flames of love, and as a whole burnt-offering to Christ: and O how many who profess Christianity are unacquainted experimentally with this great work upon their souls!"

Consider further, whence all that is holy in your dispositions, all that is virtuous in your character has sprung: not from yourself—you have not made yourself to differ; but may say, "By the grace of God I am what I am." Your defects are your own; but every virtue and every excellence comes from God. To know that you are made a partaker of Christian graces, should call forth your gratitude to him whose grace has made you what you are; but to know that all these graces come from God should still keep you humble. When a Christian,* eminent for charity, had conferred some help upon an orphan, a lady who received it, said, "When he is old enough I will teach him to name and thank his benefactor." "Stop," said he, "thou art mistaken: we do not thank the clouds for the rain. Teach him to look higher, and thank HIM who giveth both the clouds and the rain." When a friend was attempting to comfort the eminently useful Richard Baxter, on his death-bed, by reminding him of the good done by his preaching and writings, he replied, "I was but a pen in God's hand; and what praise is due to a pen?" So, whatever you are, or ever may be, God is the source of your graces. Praise should be his, humility yours.

* Richard Reynolds.

§ 10. RESIGNATION.—To yield all we have and are to the disposal of God; to lie passive in his hand; and to have no will of our own, no will but his, is a state infinitely desirable.

Entire resignation to the will of God is impressively inculcated in the Scriptures, by the example of various distinguished characters, and above all others, by that of the Lord of Life. Eli, who appears to have been a man of piety, but in the management of his family guilty of great faults, when warned of the destruction that awaited his house, acquiesced in the dreadful decision of God: "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." Job, bowed down with almost insupportable woes, calmly said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Hezekiah having offended God, and being warned of the evils that would overwhelm his family, replied, "Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken." An infinitely greater than these, Jesus, displayed resignation still more perfect. When contemplating his sufferings, he said, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? (shall I say) Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." When agonizing in Gethsemane, he prayed, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." "O, my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

That it is not improper to desire the removal of sufferings and the alleviation of pain, is evident from the Redeemer's conduct; and it is equally evident that the Christian in affliction may pray repeatedly

and earnestly for deliverance from the sorrows he endures. But then he still should strive to add, as the language of his very heart, Not my will, but thine be done. These examples of resignation are recorded for our imitation. Think not that this sweet passive grace is only needed to adorn the brightest piety, to shine around a martyr's head. It is essential to the Christian character in every clime, in every form, and under every circumstance.

While you are a pilgrim upon earth, love and cherish this heavenly grace; especially, in the dark and cloudy day of adversity and pain, strive to exercise unfeigned submission to your heavenly Father's will. Perhaps he may bid you leave the scenes of comfort for the chamber of affliction; perhaps he may bid you retire from the scenes of useful, active life, to weakness, languishing, and inactivity; perhaps he may snatch from your embrace friends dearer than life, or warn you, by incurable disease, that your sun is about to go down, even at noon; yet still labor and pray for resignation—that resignation, the most unfeigned, the most entire, whose inmost feeling is, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. Possessed of this, your soul will enjoy a sweet tranquillity. The tempest of unruly passions will be hushed into a calm. The rebellion of your will to God being subdued, you will be freed from a thousand secret sorrows that torment the unyielding heart. Peace will take up an abode in your breast, and you will find that it is indeed

> "Sweet to lie passive in his hand,
> "And know no will but his."

A season of suffering is not the only season in which resignation to the divine will is to be exercised. Daily

to yield yourself to the disposal of God, is resignation; and daily to do this is a privilege and duty.

§ 11. Patience is another Christian grace, which the sacred Scriptures inculcate upon all the followers of the Lamb. The occasions for the exercise of patience may perhaps all be included under three classes. One consists of the painful and mysterious dispensations of the Most High. Patience in enduring these aright, is nearly allied to resignation. The dealings of the Most High are often mysterious. "Clouds and darkness are around about him." Afflictions are perhaps protracted, or one trial scarcely ends before another begins. Calamity treads on the heels of calamity, cloud rolls on after cloud, and tempest follows tempest. Then to trust in God needs patience. This patience he requires. "Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him." "Let patience have her perfect work." My brother, or sister, follow after patience. Calmly to bear a momentary trial, needs little of this important grace; but to bear trial after trial; to pass with calm submission, and not a murmuring wish, through weeks, or months, or years of affliction; and when the scene is darkest, still to exclaim, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:" this is the spirit to which a Christian should aspire.

Patience is equally necessary to enable the Christian to persevere. It is not enough in the Christian pilgrimage, to commence the journey with alacrity, and to pass through its first stages with pleasure. He who wishes for the Christian crown, must till death pursue the Christian course. Whether the way be rough or

smooth, flowery or thorny, he must tread it to the end. Whether the heavens smile or frown, shed beams of exhilarating light, or are clothed in darkness and storms, he must pursue his course. Whether he have many friends to help him on to heaven, or none to assist him in his way, but many foes to oppose his progress, he must still go on. Whether he go cheered by the company of fellow-pilgrims, or have to press through hosts of enemies, and meet the scorn, the hatred, the persecution of friends and of mankind, he must still press forward. And whether he advance cheered by his heavenly Father's smiles and abounding in spiritual joys, or has to walk in darkness and have no light, without one spiritual comfort, but wrestling with the rulers of the darkness of this world, and encountering the fiery darts of the wicked one, the Christian must still go onward. To advance when all smiles around you, is no difficulty; but you are called to follow those who through faith and patience inherit the promises, and who went out of great tribulation. "Add," therefore, "to your faith patience."

Patience is also indispensable, to enable the Christian to exercise that meekness, gentleness, forbearance, and forgiveness, which are essential parts of the religion of the Savior. The character, says Paley, which is the subject of the commendation, precepts, and example of the Lord Jesus, is "meek, yielding, complying, forgiving; willing to suffer; silent and gentle under rudeness and insult, suing for reconciliation where others would demand satisfaction, giving way to the pressure of impudence; conceding and indulgent to the prejudices, the wrong-headed-

ness, the intractability of those with whom it has to deal.

§ 12. The Savior does not merely represent such a character as amiable in his sight, but he inculcates the attainment of it upon his disciples. His word says, "Be patient towards all men." "Follow after patience." "If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not." "Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."

The patience thus inculcated, the divine Savior exemplified. He bore with mildness the dullness and unbelief of his friends, and the taunts and malice of his enemies. When his disciples contended who should be the greatest, he mildly reproved them, by setting a little child in the midst, and teaching them, that those who would inherit his kingdom must become lowly as that child. When Peter, James, and John slept, instead of watching with him, in the season of his greatest sorrow, he calmly said, "Could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." When Peter wickedly denied him, he only turned and looked on Peter, and by that piercing look reproved him; and though all his disciples forsook him and fled when his death approached, yet when he rose again he said, "Go tell my BRETHREN that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me." When Judas came to execute his treason, he meekly said, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" and when the traitor drew near and kissed him, instead of an up-

braiding word, his gentle language was, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" With equal patience did he expostulate with other more open enemies, when he said, "Many good works have I showed you from my Father, for which of those works do ye stone me?"

Perhaps for conscience' sake you may have to encounter that kind of persecution which still exists. You may have to bear the frown of friends, the ridicule of former gay companions, or possibly even the loss of home. Perhaps you may be threatened with the displeasure of parents and relatives, or of employers on whom your support has depended. If this should be the case, let patience have its perfect work. With patience take up your cross and follow Christ. He says, "I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, fear him." "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." "If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him."

If you are called to trials of these descriptions, the great God encourages you to trust in him, and fear not what man can do. But if you shrink from them, in doing so you will turn away from heaven. The

fearful, as well as the unbelieving and profligate, must have their portion in the lake of fire. But if you are called to such trials, and persevere, the prize is great, the crown is glorious.

§ 13. Connected with resignation and patience is CONTENTMENT. The possession of this will save you from a thousand snares, and from a thousand sorrows. The holy Savior displayed it in his life, and taught it by his precepts. How little did he possess! How humble was his fare! No sumptuous entertainments were made in his lowly abode! No glitter of finery adorned his dwelling! He was content with the situation of a carpenter. He was partly supported by the kindness of a few pious followers, "who ministered unto him of their substance;" and paid a trifle of tribute by a miracle. His most eminent disciple manifested a similar spirit: "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

Similar to these examples are the instructions addressed, in the sacred Scriptures, to the disciples of the Savior. "Be content with such things as you have. for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." "Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." "Art thou called, being a slave? care not for it."

The admonition given to Baruch is most important: "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not." By discontent multitudes have destroyed their peace, and, it is to be feared, undone their souls. Dissatisfied with the allotments of the Most High, they

have aimed at greater things, and in pursuit of these have neglected the admonitions of conscience, have violated the precepts of Heaven; and following the shadows of time, have slighted and lost the treasures of eternity. The course of some has ended in disappointment; others have succeeded in obtaining the wealth or honor they pursued, but have lost religion and heaven in the pursuit. Many young persons, employed in the service of pious families, or in situations where their religious privileges were fully enjoyed, have left such situations for others, where they had no such advantages, but where a few more pounds a year might be obtained. In such cases religion has often died. They have gained a little worldly profit; but it has been gained by the loss of everlasting life, and the ruin of an immortal soul. Ah, dreadful profit! wretched bargain! deceived and foolish purchasers! How much happier are they, whose worldly profits and possessions may be much smaller, but who, taught by Jesus, are content with such things as they have; whose home is in the skies, whose heart is there; who pass through life as travelers to heaven, and who, having sought first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, read their title clear to the inheritance of the saints in light.

CHAPTER X.

GOVERNMENT OF THE TEMPER.—GOVERNMENT OF THE THOUGHTS.—GOVERNMENT OF THE LIPS.—SELF-EXAMINATION.—IMPROVEMENT OF TIME.—RECREATIONS.

§ 1. Whether we regard the honor of religion or the comfort of domestic life, much depends upon governing the temper. Some persons are naturally possessed of a temper kind and sweet; and are thus prepared, when they become partakers of religion, to display its most attractive charms. Others are naturally violent and passionate, or sullen and morose.

IT IS AS MUCH THE OFFICE OF RELIGION TO SOFTEN AND SUBDUE HARSH AND UNRULY TEMPERS, AS IT IS TO MORTIFY THE MOST FLAGRANT VICES. Little do they know of the design of religion, and little do they feel of its power, who are insensible to this.

The word of God inculcates meekness and gentleness, and the mild and lovely tempers of the Savior. "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath." "Be ye angry, and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath; neither give place to the devil." "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, be put away from you, with all malice." "Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering." "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted." "The fruit of the Spirit is peace, gentleness, meekness." "Follow after meekness."

In these important passages how many weighty reasons are included for cherishing a meek and gentle

temper, and for repressing harshness, sullenness, and passion. If the authority of the infinite God avails, you here have his commands. If a dread of yielding to the wicked one can prevail, he cautions us not to give place to the devil by indulging wrath.

The Most High enforces the necessity of gentleness and meekness, by pronouncing the meek blessed; by declaring gentleness a fruit of the Spirit; and by teaching us, that if we would walk worthy of our holy calling, it must be with lowliness and meekness. Important promises are made to the meek. "The meek will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way." "The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord." If any thing more were wanting to stamp a value on mild and gentle tempers, it may be found in the declaration, that they form an ornament to the human character, highly valued by God himself. "Whose adorning let it be THE ORNAMENT OF A MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT, which is in THE SIGHT OF GOD OF GREAT PRICE."

After these testimonies to the importance of mildness and gentleness, think not that the government of your temper is of little importance. A furious, or sullen and sour professor of the Gospel, instead of recommending religion, more effectually teaches men to hate it than does a drunkard or a blasphemer. And the same authority that condemns drunkenness and the drunkard, declares harsh tempers the fruits of the flesh, and forbids them to the followers of the Lamb.

§ 2. The honor of religion, your own happiness, and that of those around you, depend so much on the daily exercise of mild and gentle tempers, that it may be important to pursue the subject by viewing the exam-

ple of the holy Jesus. During his life of trials, he manifested unruffled gentleness and meekness. No passion, no resentment, no sullen anger ever appeared in him. His life was a life of meekness; and when injuriously led to death, he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and not one angry word escaped his lips. Wrath and passion are most apt to be displayed to enemies. His enemies were many; but he displayed no resentment. When the Jews were about to stone him, he mildly said, "Many good works have I shown you from my Father, for which of those works do ye stone me?" When cruelly insulted before the tribunal of Caiaphas, he said, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me." His friends often displayed much dullness and unbelief; yet he manifested no resentful emotions; but kindly instructed them, or mildly expostulated with them. And for them, when sleeping even during his agony, he pleaded in excuse, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Would you honor religion, and have your dwelling the abode of peace, copy the gentleness of Jesus, and watch and pray for meekness like your Lord's. By soft words turn away anger: and never, never relax in your prayers and exertions, till your temper is brought into obedience to Christ. *Great occasions* for displaying some of the *splendid virtues* of Christianity *seldom* occur; it is by a *daily* attention to its more *retired graces* that you must manifest its power. A martyr's firmness you will probably never be called to display: but the Savior's gentleness and mildness you are called upon to manifest every day. Not once in your life you may be summoned to prove, by renouncing liberty,

friends, and property, that you prefer your Lord to all earthly good; but a hundred petty, yet vexing occurrences may arise even in a day, to give you an opportunity of proving that you imitate Jesus's example, and show that you treasure in your heart, and display in your life, his admonitions respecting the loveliness and worth of a meek and quiet spirit.

§ 3. Another often much neglected duty is the GOVERNMENT OF THE THOUGHTS. Thought is the spring of action. Holy affections are strengthened by virtuous thoughts and meditations; and countless sins are committed by the indulgence of impure, or sensual, or resentful thoughts. Think it not therefore a matter of small importance, what are the thoughts which fill your mind during your busy or your lonely hours. Consider that God observes your every thought. "The Lord looketh at the heart," "and understandeth your thoughts afar off." The blessed Savior also asserts, that the greatest crimes may be perpetrated in the secret chambers of the imagination; for "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." The indulgence of evil thoughts is represented as descriptive of those who are hastening to perdition. "The wicked will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts." Hence their thoughts are declared to be hateful to the heart-searching God. "The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord." "A heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, God hateth." Such thoughts need repentance and forgiveness. "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness," said the Apostle Peter, "and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." Those who wish for ho-

liness and happiness, are exhorted to forsake evil thoughts. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts."

On the other hand, to indulge pious thoughts is represented as descriptive of piety. "I will sing praise unto my God, my meditation of him shall be sweet." "Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night." To have the thoughts frequently occupied with divine subjects, was required from the people of God under the old dispensation; and reason and Scripture may convince us that it is not less important under the new. The Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, directed Timothy to meditate on these things, and to give himself to meditation and prayer. Peter, the favored disciple of the Lord of glory, not long before he quitted this world, wrote his second epistle, that his beloved friends might be stirred up to have those things which belonged to their eternal peace "ALWAYS IN REMEMBRANCE." If, after all these testimonies to the importance of repressing evil thoughts, and of cherishing those of a holy and pious nature, more were necessary, you have it in the declaration of the blessed God, that "a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that THOUGHT UPON HIS NAME. They shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in the day when I make up my jewels."

To assist in governing the thoughts, it is a highly useful practice in the morning to fix upon some part of the divine word, though it should be but a single verse, which may furnish matter for meditation at leisure intervals during the day. Such a practice will store the mind with Scripture knowledge, will greatly

promote pious feeling, and will lead to enlarged views of the wisdom and loving-kindness of the Lord; if one day in a believer's life can be spent with God, every day may; and who at the close of life will regret such exertions to promote in his own soul a spirit of piety and of meetness for eternal glory?

§ 4. If you are a Christian, the government of your WORDS will be an object of your earnest care. You will not think it sufficient to avoid falsehood, profaneness, and slander; but all conversation that can pollute the mind, or that tends to excite improper passions or unchristian feelings in others or yourself. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, neither foolish talking nor jesting, which are not convenient; but that which is good, to the use of edifying.' Plainly sinful is language calculated to irritate those whose natural disposition may be less calm than your own. In such cases, they who provoke, however tranquil themselves, are guilty of more sin than they who are provoked into rage. As he who *coolly* tempts another to sin, is evidently much more wicked than he who falls by that temptation. Religion also enjoins its professors to guard against unprofitable as well as mischievous conversation; and to endeavor to render their discourse beneficial and improving. Jesus said, "I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." And let it not be forgotten, that the Christian should cherish a habit of frequently discoursing on subjects not only harmless and useful, but decidedly religious. "They that feared the Lord spake often to

one another, and the Lord hearkened and heard." 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

The government of our discourse is not easy; but is one of the highest Christian attainments; so high, that the Scriptures declare that "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." Nor is it unimportant; for in that solemn survey of our conduct and character which must fix our eternal state, words, as well as actions and dispositions, will be brought into account, and "by thy words thou shalt be justified, or by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

The power of speech is an important talent; by it you may reclaim the vicious, cheer the sad, guide the bewildered, instruct the ignorant, and comfort those who mourn. Improved aright, it will be the source of innumerable benefits to yourself and those with whom you are connected; but if misimproved, it will heap upon your soul numberless sins, and prepare it for final condemnation.

§ 5. When interests of great magnitude are at stake, how solicitous are men to guard against deception! What care the purchaser of an estate employs to prevent being deluded by an insufficient title! How watchfully the general of an army scrutinizes every movement of the enemy, lest by artifice and delusion he should be robbed of victory! But you are engaged in a more important warfare than any on which crowns and kingdoms, life and liberty depend. You seek a title to richer possessions than misers ever coveted, or kings possessed· a far more exceeding and eternal

weight of glory. Delusion however may rob you of the splendid prize. Self-deception, that common foe, would shut you out of heaven, and sink you to perdition.

There is not so much self-deception on any subject as on those connected with the interests of eternity. The poor are sensible of their poverty, the sick feel their want of health, the captive his imprisonment; out myriads, who are poor for eternity, suppose themselves rich in heavenly treasures; and while sinking into the arms of eternal death, imagine themselves the heirs of immortal life. The Searcher of hearts assigns the cause of such horrible delusion: "The heart is deceitful above all things. Who can know it?" Hence arises the importance of frequent and rigid SELF-EXAMINATION. The sacred Scriptures inculcate this important duty. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" In that holy book we are also taught to look up to the Seacher of hearts for grace to purify the soul from those corruptions which, after the most rigid self-examination, may still remain hidden from our observation. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." The importance of self-acquaintance is strongly enforced by the Lord Jesus Christ, in the parable of the ten virgins. Of ten that set out for heaven, he represents half as self-deceived. Five were wise and five were foolish. And the foolish were *always foolish*. At the commencement of their course they

were so; yet such was their delusion, that they never discovered their error till the day of grace was past. Only when called to meet the bridegroom, did they perceive that they had no oil in their lamps.

That you may not be deceived where eternity is at stake, try yourself as in his sight who will hereafter try you. Frequently examine your own spiritual estate. Mark every symptom which may assist you in forming a faithful judgment of your own condition, and endeavor to form no opinion of yourself but that which you have reason to believe God forms of you.

§ 6. Examine the reality of your *conversion*, and the sincerity of your repentance. Is your repentance heartfelt? is it universal? do you abhor yourself? do you hate all sin?

Examine your *faith*. Is the blessed Jesus the grand object on which it fixes? Have you been drawn to him for pardon and peace? Is your faith *active?* does it work by love? is it *powerful?* does it overcome the world? is it *sanctifying?* does it purify your heart? is it *comforting?* through it have you obtained from the Lord Jesus all the true peace you ever knew, and are you seeking more? is it indeed *living?* does it operate in your heart as a mighty principle, urging you to mortify all sin, to pursue all holiness, and set your affections on heaven, and to scorn all that earth can give or threaten, for the sake of Jesus Christ and him crucified? Is your soul committed to his care? are your immortal interests intrusted to his hands? Is he your all in all? and are you his humble and sincere, though unworthy disciple?

Examine your *conduct*. What is it in the family, the church, and the world? Do you imitate the Son of

God? do his laws rule, his precepts guide you? do you *daily* set his example before you? and copy him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners?

Examine your *tempers* and dispositions. Are you humble, gentle, meek, forgiving, courteous, patient? Not giving way to pride, anger, passion, sullenness, obstinacy; but mortifying those evil tempers to which by nature you may be most prone?

Examine your *heart.* Keep it with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. What harbors there? do unkindness, self-conceit, self-importance, discontent? Anger, that fires at a word; pride, that flames into resentment at every real or supposed offence; envy, that repines at another's good; and worldly-mindedness, that grovels in the dust, and grasps at earth more eagerly than heaven? Or are you laboring and praying to defeat and kill all this hellish brood? and cherishing within your breast those sweet graces which angels cherish, meekness, and humility, and gratitude, and love?

Examine your *discourse.* Do you watch over your lips, that neither impure nor foolish talking may ever proceed from them; that no slander may wound another's mind, or injure another's character? that no provoking language may inflame another's passions? and no unkind expressions pierce and pain another's heart? Is your discourse about even the ordinary concerns of time, such as you would not wish to be concealed from the Savior? Does your tongue speak its Creator's praise, and direct, or comfort, or encourage those fellow-pilgrims to heaven with whom you asso-

ciate? and do you warn and endeavor to reclaim those you see wandering to perdition?

Thus examine yourself, and let not this be a rare and strange employment to you. If your circumstances will allow sufficient leisure, every evening take a review of the departed day. Recollect its faults, that you may mourn and avoid them; remember its mercies, that you may praise their Giver, and lie down, considering that your last day will soon arrive, and your body be laid in that bed where it must continue till the heavens be no more. But if you *cannot* obtain sufficient time for this exercise daily, yet when the Sabbath brings its rest from toil and care, not only wait upon your God in public, but devote some part of every Sabbath to serious self-examination. Consider how the week that is gone for ever has been spent; what progress you are making in your journey to heaven; what duties you have neglected; what sins you have committed; what graces most need maturing; what temptations you have to prepare against; what mercies you have received; and what awaits you in your endless home. An hour thus spent every Sabbath will prove an invaluable blessing. Attendance on the most judicious ministry, and uniting in the most fervent public devotions, will not help you materially forward, without such private communion with yourself, and then with your God.

§ 7. REDEEM THE TIME. The sacred Scriptures direct us diligently to improve the fleeting span of life, to live sensible of its uncertainty, and waiting for its end. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor know-

ledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

Think how much you have to do in time. How many corruptions to mortify! How many graces to strengthen! If you are a child of God, yet how far you fall short of what a child of God should be! And time is the season given that you may grow in grace, and under the forming hand of God be meetened for eternal rest.

How will you value time when you approach the borders of eternity! How will time then appear to have been idled away, that has not answered some profitable purpose! The great end of your being here, is to glorify God and to secure eternal life. If this be slighted, it matters little whether the reason for which it is neglected be the attainment of a monarch's crown or a day laborer's hire. Some waste time, and leave the business of life undone, because they are too busy to regard it; others because they are too idle. Some are tempted by the grandeurs of the world to waste the precious day of life, while from the thoughts of others its due improvement is banished by multiplied cares. Some waste time in airy speculations, which they esteem learning; others on romances, novels, or other foolish trifles that consume their hours, but impart no useful knowledge to their minds.

O act a wiser part than they. Waste not that precious time, which must so soon end. It flies fast enough, and when once gone, it is not to be recalled. It is too precious to be redeemed, and too steady to be stopped in its course. Thrones and dominions cannot purchase back one hour of wasted time. Did a voice

from heaven every morning tell us how many years, or months, or days we had to live, we should then perceive how fast time departed, and how soon its end must come; but now one day is so like another, that we perceive no difference, and are not affected by thinking, To-day I am nearer to eternity than I was yesterday. I have one day less to live, and one more to account for at my Judge's bar. Indulge such reflections: let every morning remind you of the great morning of eternity. It comes, it hastens on. Ah, who can tell how fast! Let every closing evening lead you to contemplate the close of life—the period when it shall be said to you, Thy day of service and of grace is no more. Feel your pulse—it beats—what does it declare?—that your time is going; for at every stroke it has one less to give. Look therefore on time, as time ever coming nearer to its end; and spend its golden moments as in your dying day you will wish to have spent them. As a follower of Jesus, shun as much as possible such upbraiding reflections as these upon a dying bed, or in the eternal world:—My Savior never spent one idle moment. But, oh! how much of my time that should have honored him, was idled away! What far brighter holiness might I have reached! How much better might I have served my Lord! How much more might I have done for him who did so much for me, had I but well improved that time I trifled uselessly away!

§ 8. Rising late in the morning is one mode in which much time is lost. It was observed by a pious young lady, that one day well spent condemns a life, so much may be crowded into one well spent day. Of that eminently pious minister, Joseph Alleine, it is related

that if he heard workmen pursuing their business before he was engaged in his religious exercises, he would say, "O how this noise shames me! Doth not my Master deserve more than theirs?" And often said, "Give me that Christian who accounts his time more precious than gold." The same spirit appeared in various other expressions which he used; for instance, at the beginning of a week—"Another week is before us, let us spend this week for God!" In a morning—"Come now, let this day be spent for God. Let us live this one day well. Could we resolve to be more than ordinarily circumspect for one day at a time, we might live at extraordinary rates."

And does the Savior demand too much, when he bids you sedulously and devoutly to improve that fleeting span of time which must so soon give place to eternity? Is it too much for you to devote the whole of this little life to his glory who will bestow on you eternal ages of salvation? Can you regret to be *always* religious, always diligent, always bent on improving time, on honoring Jesus, and growing ripe for heaven? Let your life be as long as it may, yet compared with those worlds of ages, it is but as a thought, or a dream, or a sigh.

§ 9. So far as RECREATION is necessary, let it be such as accords with your character. Are you a Christian in truth? Then you are a disciple of a compassionate Savior, and compassion should distinguish you. Any amusement that occasions pain, even to the meanest creature, is inconsistent with your character and disgraceful to your profession. As a Christian, you are a child of God, a member of his family, a temple of his Spirit, a member of Christ, and a citizen of heaven.

And do the vain pastimes of a sinful and blinded world comport with such a character? Is the giddy ball-room, or the wanton playhouse, the midnight assembly, or the card or gaming-table, suited to your situation and becoming your profession? Did the Savior of mankind ever frequent such scenes, or were he on earth would he frequent them now? Yet he left you his example, that you should follow his steps. Would any one of his apostles (unless it were Judas) have partaken of such amusements? Yet if there were no harm in them, there would have been no harm in apostles sharing them. And if they were improper for them, they are for you. For the blood that redeemed them was shed for you, and the eternity that awaited them awaits you. Should a Christian, a child of God, be seen standing to gaze at a puppet-show; or mingle with the clamoring, shouting, swearing, drinking, gambling crowd that frequent races, and fairs, and other worldly amusements? If the amusement itself were not sinful, to associate with such men is to disgrace the sacred profession of religion.

Let your recreations accord also with your prospects. You look forward to death—you have eternity before you. You hope to join the throng of the redeemed; to sing the anthems of heaven; to become every thing but an angel, among the angels of light; to worship before the eternal throne; to dwell with God; to live and praise among all the myriads of the blest. Should a dying man trifle away the fair day of life? Should one who expects to be judged for every hour, waste the hours which go so fast and never must return? Could an angel or a glorified saint sojourn a few weeks in this world, where would you expect to

find him? Not in the theatre, not in the ball-room, not at the card-table, not employing the few days of his stay on novels or romances, be they ever so ingenious; but cheering by his presence the abodes of sickness and sorrow, or recreating his mind with admiring the works, and ways, and word of God. And do not you expect to be a glorified spirit soon? Are you not already a member of the family to which glorified spirits belong? O, let even your amusements, then, comport with such hopes and such a character! One simple rule, well observed, will lead you right. Let your amusements be such as an apostle might have partaken of, such as you will not regret in your dying moments, nor be ashamed of before the bar of the eternal Judge.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE CHOICE OF COMPANIONS, AND ON MARRIAGE.

§ 1. Of all the snares to which the Christian is exposed, perhaps the most fatal, the most ruinous, are those which spring from IMPROPER COMPANIONS. These are often Satan's grand and most successful instruments for entangling and finally destroying some who bid fair for heaven.

To have no intercourse with those who are strangers to religion, is in the present state of things impracticable; "for then must you needs go out of the

world." And so to seclude ourselves from the world, as to neglect opportunities for doing good to the bodies or the souls of those who may be perishing in sin around us, would be conduct opposed to both the precepts and example of the holy Jesus. Yet with equal plainness and solemn authority the God of the Bible forbids his children selecting their bosom friends and intimate companions from among those who are strangers to his grace.

§ 2. The word of God expressly forbids associating with evil companions. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." "If sinners entice thee, consent thou not. My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path." "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

As the Most High thus forbids intimate friendship between his children and the followers of the world, so his word abounds with weighty motives for obedience to these commands. It describes those as blessed who avoid irreligious associates. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Separation from the evil is also described as necessary, if we wish to walk in the paths of piety. The Psalmist said, "Depart from me, ye wicked men; for I will keep the commandments of my God." As if he had said, I cannot keep those commandments and associate with you; but I will keep them, therefore we must part. On the other hand, to cherish intimate

acquaintance with those who are strangers to religion, is represented as the way to destruction. "A companion of fools shall be destroyed." The history of Lot affords one of the most affecting examples possible of the effect of evil society. When Abraham departed from his country at God's command, Lot accompanied him, and probably then was influenced by a similar spirit of devoted piety; but when, attracted by the fertility and beauty of the plain of Jordan, he went to dwell in the cities of that plain, how dire was the result! Part of his family perished at the burning of Sodom, his only surviving daughters, infected with all the depravity of that guilty city, debased their father, by rendering him drunk, and committing with him the most atrocious incest. They became the parents of a guilty and idolatrous race, and he stands upon record, a monument of the bitter fruits of plunging into the society of the evil, for the sake of transitory worldly advantage.

§ 3. But you may inquire, What company is evil? Not that only of the profligate and profane, of the dissolute and abandoned; but that of all those who are strangers to vital piety. The vain, giddy, thoughtless multitude, who disregard the interests of eternity, and live without God in the world, however moral in their conduct, or amiable in their manners, are associates that would be ruinous to your best interests.

There is no snare by which young professors of religion are more likely to be undone than by this. To urge you therefore to shun this snare, consider its numerous evils. Consider that evil company is the root of all evil.

Should you make any that are strangers to religion

your bosom-friends, you will most probably soon become like them. If they are lewd and debauched, they will lead you to the same guilty excesses. Though at first your soul may tremble at their abominations, you will soon join in their revelry, and partake of their crimes. If they are scoffers and infidels, though you may think your faith too firm to be shaken, you will soon find your confidence weaken, your hopes decline, your value for the Gospel and religion lessen, and you will go on step by step, till, Jesus and salvation forsaken, you sit in the seat of the scorner. But if your companions are of a less openly wicked kind, yet their influence and example will be immensely and eternally mischievous to you. Religion will languish and decline. When you see your favorite friends neglecting that one thing needful, and perhaps representing devout attention to eternal things as enthusiasm, you will most probably imbibe their spirit. At first perhaps be silent, then laugh with them at what they deem preciseness, then venture on the sinful follies they call harmless pleasures. Your soul will grow cold and dead to the Savior and his love. With such companions you will learn to profane your Sabbaths. Devotion will become burdensome, and then perhaps be altogether neglected. Your mind will be alienated from its sacred exercises, and have no longer any relish for its pleasures. Can you imagine that when you have spent perhaps your evenings with those whose chief concern seems levity, laughter, and mirth, you can retire to read, to meditate, and pray? Ah, no! the duties of devotion will become a burdensome task; its most important exercises dull and tedious; your heart will be estranged from God, and fixed upon your beloved but

vain and destructive companions. With them, too, you will incur the heavy guilt of wasting many precious hours—hours given you by God to secure a happy eternity—hours which, when this scene of vanity is ending, you would give worlds to purchase.

§ 4. But if you associate with worldly companions, you will not stop here. When you have lost the power of religion, you will most probably go on from sin to sin. Perhaps, as thousands have been, you may be drawn into crimes which may ruin your reputation, blast your prospects, destroy your comforts, or even shorten your days. If this should not be the case when drawn aside from religion, there will be little hope of your ever enjoying its blessings again. Few backsliders are restored. You may live forsaken by God, with a heart hardened in impenitence; by your example you may train up your children; and at last, without hope meet death, and under the frown of your Judge enter eternity.

Then those thoughtless creatures that were your beloved companions upon earth will be your companions in hell. But their hours of sinful pleasure will then be past; their delights will have reached an eternal close; their laughter at religion and their cheerful songs will be terminated, and all that rendered their intercourse delightful will have come to an eternal end. Then will be fulfilled the dreadful declaration, "The companion of fools shall be destroyed."

§ 5. Were you sure that you should not be drawn altogether from religion by worldly companions, yet there would be many reasons to forbid such unhallowed intimacies. All that are strangers to converting

grace have the carnal mind, which is enmity against God; and "should you love them that hate the Lord?" Should you take your chief pleasure in those in whom God takes no pleasure? Should you find your chief delight in them who have no delight in your Savior; and in whom he has no satisfaction? Is it right that they should have your heart, while the world and the wicked one have theirs? What though their friendship should not be ruinous to your best interests, yet what pleasure should you find in them who are hastening to eternal death? Shortly there must be an eternal separation between the children of this world and the children of light. They must soon part, and part for ever. As thus after a moment of time they must separate, and never, never meet again; it is best for the Christian to begin this separation now, and not to set his heart and affections upon those who soon must be torn from him, and placed at an impassable distance through all eternity. It is best for the Christian to form those friendships now, which may be renewed in heaven, and perpetuated for ever and ever.

§ 6. Choose those, therefore, for your friends, who are the friends of God—friends that will be friends for ever. They can sympathize with you in your sorrows—the worldly cannot; they may obtain blessings for you by their prayers—the gay and thoughtless would gain you none, but rather deprive you of the blessings your own prayers might obtain. They would do you good in your pilgrimage, and you might indulge the comfortable hope of meeting them in heaven, and of joining them there in all the noble employments and exalted pleasures of that happy, holy world. How much better, how much happier, to travel to heaven with be-

loved companions, heirs with you of the grace of life, than to have associates that are without hope, without God, and without Christ!

Besides all these motives for shunning evil company the blessed God has graciously furnished a motive, wonderfully endearing and encouraging. He promises you his own friendship, if you renounce the friendship of the world. When he says, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate," he graciously adds, 'and I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters." With such a promise proclaimed in your hearing, can you hesitate whether to choose the friendship of God, or the attachment of some, perhaps amiable, but ungodly and perishing companions? His friendship for eternity, or theirs for an inch of time? His that would bless you with eternal life, or theirs that would rob you of that prize, and sink you in destruction? His favor, that would fill your soul with present peace, and enrich you with blessings that will be enjoyed without intermission through an eternal day of glory; or theirs, which, when it does its utmost, can but please a few short hours with vain mirth, that is, like a transient blaze, followed by eternal darkness?

ON MARRIAGE.

§ 7. As wisdom in the choice of companions is thus important, still more important is the exercise of Christian wisdom in the choice of a companion for life. There is no subject on which many professors of religion seem so inattentive to the rules of duty as on this; and deplorable are the consequences of their sin and

folly. If you have already entered that union, which death only must dissolve, and have formed it with one who is a stranger to the paths of peace, the advice contained in this chapter can be of little service to you. "The die is cast, and cast for life." Your duty is to watch and pray, that you may not be drawn into the paths of the destroyer. Endeavor to act the Christian's part. Labor and pray for the eternal welfare of him or of her who may be as dear to you as your own life, but who, you are aware, is not dear to God, but perishing in sin. With what melting pity should you behold the friend of your bosom, the partner of your heart, no sharer with you in even one spiritual blessing! dear to you through nature's ties, but an enemy to your God! With what sorrow should you think that the friend who was traveling with you the journey of life, sharing its cares and its comforts, has no inheritance in your home; but when the journey of life ends, must be separated from you, to meet no more through all eternity! How fervent should be your prayers, how watchful your conduct, that if possible you may lead this dear, but perishing friend, to your Savior, for life, and peace, and pardon!

§ 8. But if you have not entered into the marriage union, then, as you love your soul, as you regard your peace, as you value the favor of your God, never form that connection with any one, however amiable, however moral, however endowed with the gifts of fortune or nature, who is not a decided follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This advice may be enforced by reasons the most weighty and momentous.

§ 9. Marriage between those who partake of divine

grace, and those who are strangers to religion, is represented in the Scriptures as the *source of the greatest evils*, and such unequal matches are abundantly condemned. According to the sense usually attributed to several verses in the sixth of Genesis, unhallowed marriages are represented as the cause of that dreadful wickedness which occasioned the destruction of mankind by the general deluge. It was when the sons of God chose for their wives the fair but impious daughters of men, that the iniquity of man became so great as to call down that dreadful judgment from a patient and merciful God. These wicked connections matured human depravity, filled up the measure of man's iniquity, ripened a world for impending vengeance, banished the last lingering traces of piety from almost every heart, made this earth a scene of dreadful desolation, and hurried multitudes to the pit of eternal night. When the world was repeopled, the same cause produced in smaller circles effects not less deplorable. What made part of the daughters of Lot slight God's gracious warning to escape from perishing Sodom? They were married to some of its depraved inhabitants. What rendered those who did escape such monsters of impurity? Doubtless they had contracted this among those with whom they had too long conversed. What rendered Solomon, the wisest of men, an idolatrous fool? What made him, once so favored by God, once so devoted to his glory, an impious apostate, a worshiper of pagan abominations? "His wives turned away his heart after other gods, and he went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians; and Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites; and Chemosh, the

abomination of Moab; and Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon." The piety that erected God's most splendid temple, the wisdom that nations admired, could not shield him from the accursed influence of unhallowed connections. When we see the wise Solomon become an aged infatuate apostate, bowing at an idol's shrine, because an impious wife adored that idol, need we wonder if we see professors of religion, that marry unbelievers, joining in the sins and follies that please an ungodly wife or husband, and going, like an ox to the slaughter, where Satan leads them? What aggravated the crimes of impious Ahab, who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Lord? Jezebel, his pagan wife, urged him forward in his career of iniquity.

§ 10. The word of God not only represents such unhallowed unions as dangerous in the extreme, but expressly and absolutely *forbids* them. They were expressly forbidden to Israel of old. The reason of the case might sufficiently prove, that what was thus offensive to God under the dispensation of Moses, could not be less offensive under the more spiritual and holy dispensation of the Gospel. But we are not left to dubious inference. The Christian law upon this subject is decisive and plain. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord." 2 Cor. 6: 14–18. Nothing can be a more complete violation of this law, than marriage with a person destitute of heavenly grace. In that case, instead of not being unequally yoked together with an unbeliever, the believer is *voluntarily* yoked, till death dissolve the union, to one whom God esteems an unbeliever. Instead of coming

out from such persons, the believer is permanently united to one in the closest of all connections. Instead of being separate, a union is *sought* and formed, where the interests, hopes, cares, fears, business, pains, and pleasures of the parties are all intimately mingled, and *mingled for life.* What can be more glaring rebellion against the majesty of heaven? What more willful contempt of the giver of this law?

The same law is given in expressions equally definite on another occasion. When the liberty of a female to marry is declared, it is said, "She is at liberty to be married to whom she will, ONLY IN THE LORD." 1 Cor. 7 : 39. All considerations respecting property, or age, or temper, or health, or prospects, are left to the prudence of the parties; but this one restriction God lays down, the believer must marry no one who is not in the Lord. The expression *in the Lord*, is too common in the Scriptures for its meaning to be mistaken. It evidently signifies a person who is a partaker of saving grace, a true disciple of Jesus, an humble child of God.

§ 11. When we behold the conduct of many that profess religion, we might suppose that a law like this did not exist in the Bible. How many thoughtlessly entwine their affections and interests with those who are utter strangers to the way of peace—clasp in their arms the children of the wicked one, and give their hearts to those whom Satan rules!

To arm you, if in any danger of insnarement, against this common and destructive sin, consider that it is a great sin, a sin deeply dyed with wicked ingratitude. God is the giver of the law which forbids your being yoked with an unbeliever, and which allows you to

marry only in the Lord. And are not you under the greatest obligations to obey your gracious God? Are not you under the strongest ties to love him? Are not you bought with that price, precious and invaluable, the blood of Christ? And are not you directed to do whatever you do, "to the glory of God?" Should not you then yield your heart to him who has so loved you? To encourage you to this, he gives the most gracious promise possible, "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters." Of what ingratitude would you be guilty, if, with such a promise given by such a God, you trample under foot his righteous law!

§ 12. To break this law has all the guilt of rebellion against the authority of God. Idolatry, fornication, or adultery you would esteem great crimes; for God abhors and forbids those crimes; but God as truly forbids unhallowed marriages; and they who marry strangers to religion as truly rebel against God as they who lead lives of unlicensed lewdness.

The sin committed by a believer in such case is much aggravated by its being a willful and deliberate sin. It is not a sudden fall, like Peter's; it is not a crime committed unawares, or to which persons are hurried in a moment of impetuous passion; but it is a *deliberate and willful crime.* The young man, month after month, pursues the object on which he fixes his affections, though he knows that whatever charms she possess, she has not that one which excels all others, the charm of humble piety. The young woman, month after month, receives the addresses of her lover, though she is aware that whatever worth he may possess, he is not a disciple of the Son of God. Thus the rebellion

against the authority of God is willful and continued; and month after month, and perhaps year after year, is the Most High insulted by beholding those who profess to serve him, willfully, obstinately, and perseveringly transgressing one of his righteous laws.

This crime, great and aggravated in every case, receives a further aggravation in the case of men. They are not under that restraint which custom and modesty impose upon the tender sex. They may look around the whole circle of pious females with whom they are acquainted, to select one on whom the fondest affections of their hearts may repose; but when they, slighting all those with whom they enjoy or might obtain acquaintance, go into the world to look for the companion of their days, and fix upon a person who is a stranger to the religion of the Gospel, their conduct is flagrantly criminal. It admits of no palliation or excuse. *It is open, hardy, undisguised rebellion against the Lord of heaven and earth.*

If the motives that lead to these unhallowed unions be examined, the guilt of those who contract them will not be lessened. In the least guilty it may be a rash and thoughtless affection. To those who are thus influenced it may be said, Shouldst thou love them that hate the Lord? Surely those professors of religion who, out of love to a fellow-mortal, trample on the authority and willfully violate the laws of the Lord of heaven and earth, plainly show that God is not the first in their affections, that the Savior does not rule supreme in their hearts. They show that they prefer the objects of their choice to God and Christ, and thus, that in reality they are joined to idols.

But many enter into such unlawful marriages from

the influence of other merely sordid motives. These see no peculiar personal attractions in the objects of their respective choice; but they have more money than some, who in every other respect are their superiors, and who unite true piety with all their other recommendations. In such cases it is evident the law of God is broken merely for the sake of money, or other worldly advantage. What would you think of a person committing idolatry, or adultery, or swearing, or blasphemy, because he was paid to commit such crime? Would it not be thought a decisive proof that he was destitute of the love and fear of God? But why more so in this case than the other? He would break God's law for the sake of the money he hoped to gain by breaking it. And they, who for the sake of money marry strangers to religion, as truly break God's law, and the motive is the same—money is the motive. This is to pay them for their sin. They trample on God's authority, because they hope to be paid for doing so.

§ 13. Such being the guilt of entering into one of these unnatural marriages, it is not surprising that such conduct should be followed by *effects* mischievous in the extreme. No one is too cunning for God. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

The evils are numerous. In many cases the total loss of piety is the deplorable effect. In these sad cases the professor of religion gains the object of idolatrous affection, or acquires the property thus sought, but it is at the dreadful price of eternal happiness, and the ruin of an immortal soul. Many who once appeared promising fair for heaven, when united to followers of the world have forsaken the path of peace. Some find in their unbelieving partners the de-

cided enemies of religion; others gradually imbibe the spirit of those with whom they are united. These tempt them to join in pleasures they once abhorred; to abandon duties they once loved; to profane the Sabbath; to neglect their religious privileges; to slight their pious friends; to mingle with associates averse to piety, and to join with them in scenes of dissipation. Gradually, but too surely, the blighting, blasting influence of the forbidden union is felt upon the soul. Religion languishes—declines—and dies. The day of their marriage is the day that sets the seal to their eternal ruin. According to the language of the divine word, they marry, "having damnation, because they have cast off their faith."

§ 14. Perhaps if you, who now read these pages, are inclined to form such a forbidden union, you are deluded with the hope of bringing the object of your attachment to the ways of peace. Alas, this is but delusion! It is not in your power to change another's heart, and you have no reason to hope that God will *reward your sin* by granting you the object of your wishes. When persons have been converted after marriage, in many cases husbands and wives have been the means of leading their respective partners to embrace religion also. Thus God has blessed them and their endeavors. But when those who knew religion have married those who knew it not, seldom if ever do we see the unconverted party afterwards converted. In numberless instances the professor of religion is drawn away from God, and back to the world and destruction; but in few cases indeed do we behold the unbeliever drawn from the world and led to God. If this is your hope, it is delusion.

§ 15. In some few cases total apostacy is not the consequence of these unnatural marriages; but in these cases they are often the cause of *much unhappiness.* Much temporal distress is often their bitter fruit. It appears from various passages of Scripture, that sometimes when God forgives the sins of his own people so far as to shield them from their punishment hereafter, he lets them feel painfully the effects of their sin and folly while here. Thus, though David's adultery was forgiven, the sword was never to depart from his house. Acting apparently upon this system, the Most High frequently punishes professors of piety who form these forbidden unions. They expect happiness, but he bids sorrow encircle them; distress and affliction in various forms, and poverty, beset them. Their expectations are disappointed; their hopes fail; and though their hope for eternity is not lost, for time they see little before them but difficulty and sorrow. Thus he frowns upon them, and marks his displeasure of their sin. At other times their distresses are of another nature. They are spiritual distresses. Instead of a helper in their nearest earthly friend, they find a hinderance. If a family rises up, the instructions of one parent are counteracted by the example of the other. A good writer referring to this subject observes, that the language of a child, so circumstanced, to the miserable mother, who intreats him to read the Bible, may be, "Why should I pore over that tedious book my father never reads? Why should I spend that day in the wearisome services of the church or the chapel, which my father spends in recreation and pleasure? Why should I be so anxious to obtain what you call A NEW HEART, which my father tells me he has got through

the world well enough without, and which he calls folly and fanaticism? He says that you are too strict, and would rob your children of all the innocent enjoyments and indulgencies of youth."* If not the actual language, yet are not such sentiments likely to be adapted to the feelings of the child, one of whose parents follows the Savior, and the other the world? How painful must it be to a father or mother who feels the value of an immortal soul, who knows the Savior's love, and anxiously desires that a beloved family of children should know this also, to think, by marrying contrary to the will of God, I have, I fear, entailed eternal damnation on all my dear but thoughtless children.

§ 16. Those who cavil against a divine law because they are unwilling to submit to its restraint, invent various OBJECTIONS against the preceding statements, or excuses for rebelling against the authority of the Most High. Some plead that the unbelieving party may receive spiritual benefit, and urge the apostle's words, "What knowest thou, O wife, but thou mayest save thy husband?"

Ans. A reply to this objection has, in fact, already been given. The good done bears no proportion to the mischief. Few strangers to religion are brought to embrace it by marrying those that professed to enjoy its power; but many that professed religion are led to forsake and renounce it by entering into such forbidden unions. The words, "What knowest thou, O wife, but thou mayest save thy husband," refer not to a case of this kind, but to those cases where, of those persons

* Raffles.

who are equally strangers to religion, one party *after* marriage is brought to embrace it. In these cases the wife or husband, when converted, often becomes the means of converting their respective partner; but it is not so in those cases where professed disciples of Jesus violate his laws by marrying those who knew him not.

Obj. 2. Still it may be said, in some cases the happy result of a friend of religion marrying an amiable person who knew not its power, has been the conversion of the unbelieving party.

Ans. Allowing this in some instances to be true, it forms no justifiable reason for violating a plain divine law. The principle maintained in this case is neither more nor less than "Let us do evil that good may come." The good expected may never come, yet if it were certain that it would, the sin of breaking God's holy law is not thereby lessened. Of those who do evil that good may come, it is said their "damnation is just." I recollect reading of a thief who stole a Bible, or other religious book. This book proved the instrument of his conversion; but would any one argue, It is lawful to steal Bibles, because they may convert the thieves that steal them? Would they not rather acknowledge that the dishonest action retained all its criminality, whatever might be its effect? It is the same in the present case. Whether the unbelieving party be converted to God or remain unconverted, the believing party has incurred the guilt of willfully despising the authority of the Majesty on high.

Obj. 3. It is further objected, that so much difference exists between a nominal Christian and a heathen, that the rule which is applicable to the latter will not be so to the former.

Ans. In reply we may inquire, Wherein does that difference exist? Not in their state in the sight of God. Both are children of wrath. Not in their enjoyment of spiritual blessings; for neither has any. Not in the state of their hearts. The nominal Christian as much needs conversion as the profligate heathen, and is as unable to be saved without it. Not that one needs less grace than the other for salvation. The nominal Christian cannot be saved unless born again of the Spirit of God, and with that great change the heathen may. In fact, in many respects the balance turns in favor of the heathen. The nominal Christian has heard the Gospel, and slighted its message; the heathen has not. In one case, neglect of religion is plainly proved—that there would be such neglect is not plainly proved in the other case. The preponderance in guilt and ruin evidently lies with the nominal Christian. The Lord Jesus represented the state of heathen Tyre and Sidon, of Sodom and Gomorrah, as preferable to that of the Jews who heard his message of love in vain.

Where, then, is the difference in favor of the nominal Christian? With a heart as hard as the heathen's, and as much needing divine power to soften it; with greater sins and darker prospects, in consequence of sinning against more light and greater obligations than the heathen ever knew, the nominal Christian is going apace to a ruin as sure, but still more tremendous.

CHAPTER XII.

ON FAMILY DUTIES.

§ 1. A very considerable portion of human happiness depends on the members of a family cherishing those sentiments and practicing those duties which spring from the relations of domestic life. The religion of the Gospel is designed to diffuse peace, love, and harmony through the family circle; to soften every rugged passion, to strengthen every affectionate feeling, and to open in each house, as well as "in each breast, a little heaven." There are persons who abroad appear courteous and humble, gentle and good natured, that at home are harsh and passionate, proud or peevish, soon provoked and easily offended. It should never be forgotten by you that true piety should be shown at home. Let the family that has daily converse with you behold its brightest radiance. Thus Jesus acted; Judas, who knew him best, and saw him in his retired hours, had not one charge of folly or inconsistency to bring against him. How different from those of his professed disciples, who are esteemed abroad, but not at home; loved as Christians by those who know them least, but whose profession is doubted or scorned by those who know them best; hypocrites in reality, that have given rise to the proverb, "A saint abroad, and a devil at home." The religion of Jesus, however, is not answerable for the hypocrisy it condemns. The true disciples of the Savior will act a very different part.

There is no scene in which the all-important graces, meekness, humility, gentleness, courteous-

ness, are more important than at home. There is no situation in which watchfulness over your words and tempers is more necessary. There, many little things will occur to vex and irritate; there you are more liable to be off your guard, and thus more liable, by improper tempers and hasty words, to bring sin upon your own soul and to injure the souls of others. The directions given in the Scriptures respecting harmony, kindness, care not to provoke nor be provoked, and others of a similar kind, should be impressed on the heart of every Christian who would honor religion in the family to which he belongs.

In the general it may be observed, that whatever be your situation in the family of which you form a part, as a Christian, it should be your constant aim and daily study to display a meek, humble, gentle, benevolent, affectionate spirit, and to maintain a conscience void of offence towards all around you. The Scriptures, however, descend to directions more minute and peculiarly expressive.

§ 2. *Duties of parents.*—To instruct their children in divine truth. "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." "Teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." By needed correction to restrain them from evil. "Withhold not correction from the child; thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." Eli, though pious, fell under God's dreadful displeasure "because his sons made them-

selves vile, and he restrained them not." Not to discourage or provoke their children. "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath." "Fathers, provoke not your children, lest they be discouraged." To love their children, and to pray for them, as Job and David did, and to labor for their eternal welfare. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The expression, "Train up a child in the way he should go," signifies, to draw along by a regular and steady course of exertions. This calls for line upon line, precept upon precept; continued exertions; continued watchfulness, and unceasing care. Many pious parents, who have done something to promote their children's religious welfare, have still been far from *training* them up in the way of life. Numerous instances can be adduced of pious parents who have had ungodly children, but perhaps it would be difficult to produce one instance of the kind, in which a parent who has literally TRAINED up his child in the way he should go, has had to encounter this affliction.

§ 3. *Duties of children.*—To indulge that honor and respect for their parents which flow from filial love, and which God approves, while opposite conduct incurs his most severe displeasure. "Honor thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." "Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother." "Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression, the same is the companion of a destroyer. To hearken to the counsels of their parents, and obey

their directions, excepting only in such cases as would be sinful in the sight of God. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord." "We ought to obey God rather than men." If in age their parents need assistance and support from them, cheerfully to render this, and thus to minister to their comfort, and requite their kindness. "If any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

Duties of husbands and wives.—On the part of the wife, submission and affection; on that of the husband, tenderness, forbearance, and love, like that of the Lord Jesus to his church. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife loveth himself." "Teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded."

Duties of servants and masters.—On the part of servants, respect, obedience, and faithful attention to their employers' interests. "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh: not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with

good-will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men." "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort." "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." On the part of masters, kindness, moderation, and justice in recompensing services "Thou shalt not oppress the hired servant that is poor and needy." "Wo unto him that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work." After servants are directed to be faithful, and to serve with good will, it is added, "And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him." "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."

After this brief view of some of the duties incumbent upon persons in several of the principal relations of domestic life, allow me to beg you to consider the importance of regarding those which belong to the station that you yourself occupy. Perhaps you are the child of parents still living, whose hearts are wrapt up in you and your welfare. Consider how many solemn

motives, enforced by the most encouraging or awful sanctions, urge you to treat them with filial affection, kindness, obedience and respect. If your heart is open to the impressions of gratitude, you will render this tribute to them, who have watched over you without wearying, who have toiled for you without fainting, who have never thought they could do too much to promote your happiness, who tended you with unceasing care in infancy, and who have followed you with kind attentions even to the present hour.

If the spotless example of the Son of God, when he dwelt on earth, weighs with you, you have that example with all its power to enforce the exercise of filial piety. This wonderful person, notwithstanding his great and glorious character and sublime destination, was the fairest specimen of obedience to parents ever seen in the present world. Let children remember, that *if they have not the spirit of Christ, they are none of his.* He was subject to his parents, as a child of their family, until he was thirty years of age; and forgot not, when he hung on the cross, to provide an effectual support and protection for his mother. Let all children remember, when they are weary of laboring for *their* parents, that Christ labored for *his;* when they are impatient of their commands, that Christ cheerfully obeyed; when they are reluctant to provide for their parents, that Christ forgot himself, and provided for his mother amid the agonies of crucifixion. The affectionate language of this Divine example to every child is, *Go thou and do likewise.*

§ 4. Are you a parent, a father or a mother? Consider how much depends on your attention to your children's eternal welfare. "I was blessed with a mo-

ther," says Mr. Ward, the excellent Missionary to India, "who frequently took my sister and me aside to pray with us; and often have I heard her pray with such earnestness, mingling her tears with her petitions, and throwing so much of the feelings of the mother into her prayers, that, young as I was, it went to my very heart." He adds: "I was lately informed by a pious and able minister, that on the evening when the first permanent religious impressions were made on his mind, his pious mother was detained at home. But she spent the time devoted to public worship in secret prayer for the salvation of her son; and so fervent did she become in these intercessions, that, like our Lord in Gethsemane, she fell on her face, and remained in fervent supplication till the service had nearly closed. Her son, brought under the deepest impressions by the sermon of his father, went into a field after the service, and there prayed most fervently for himself. When he came home, the mother looked at her son with a manifest concern, anxious to discover whether her prayers had been heard, and whether her son had commenced the all-important inquiry, 'What shall I do to be saved?' In a few days the son acknowledged himself to be the subject of impressions of which none need be ashamed; impressions which lay the foundation of all excellence of character here, and of all blessedness hereafter.

"O ye Christian mothers! have *you* thus, in reference to your children, 'wrestled in birth again, till Christ be formed in their hearts the hope of glory?' Have you taken them aside, and prayed with them and for them, one by one? There is something most touching in such a scene, and to the heart of a child almost irresistible. It is a holy violence, put forth

to snatch a darling child from impending destruction; and, like the prayer mentioned by the apostle James, will unquestionably 'avail much.'"

§ 5. If you are a parent, consider the happy effect which results from such pious care. Frequently active parental piety meets its speedy reward, in the early piety of the dear objects for whom it prays, and over whom it watches. Thus were the seeds of piety sown in the hearts of Baxter, and Doddridge, and Watts; and how speedy, how rich was the harvest! In other instances instructions and prayers for a time have appeared in vain. The seed has seemed buried beneath a frozen, barren soil; yet at length it has sprung up, and bore fruit a hundred fold.*

* A pious aged woman had one son; she used every means in her power to train him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; he was the child of many prayers. The youth grew up, but was of a gay, dissipated turn; she still followed him with her entreaties, faithfully warned him of his awful situation as a sinner before God, and told him what his end would be, dying in that state. One day he went to his mother and said, "Mother, let me have my best clothes, I am going to a ball to-night." She expostulated with him, and urged him not to go, by every argument in her power; he answered, "Mother, let me have my clothes, I will go, and it is useless to say any thing about it." She brought his clothes, he put them on, and was going out; she stopped him, and said, "My child, do not go." He said he would; she then said to him, "My son, while you are dancing with your gay companions in the ball-room, I shall be out in that wilderness praying to the Lord to convert your soul." He went; the ball commenced, but instead of the usual gayety, an unaccountable gloom pervaded the whole assembly. One said, "We never had such a dull meeting in our lives;" another, "I wish we had not come, we have no life, we cannot get along;" a third, "I cannot think what is the matter." The young man instantly burst into tears, and

The happy and important effect of such instructions, even where conversion does not immediately follow, has been evident in a multitude of cases. Young persons who have received a pious education, cannot easily forget that eternal world which has been often set before them. However they may slight religion, death and judgment still alarm them. They know they are wrong, and that their parents are right. Conscience will not let them sin at ease. Its warnings mar their pleasure, and often check their career, or render them wretched when they expect delight. And perhaps years after those who prayed with and taught them are gone to the grave, they are led to the Savior, whose love was unfolded to them in their early years.

§ 6. If parents would promote the eternal welfare of their family, let them sedulously and devoutly attend to *family devotion.* If a parent, not only pray for your children, not only occasionally in your closet pray with them, but daily in your family. Let your house be a house of prayer to the living God. Many excuses are offered for neglecting this duty; but the real cause of neglect is coldness and indifference to the things of God, and the eternal welfare of a family. Let that be subdued, and other excuses will vanish like mists before the rising sun.

A striking testimony to the effect of family devotion

said, "I know what is the matter; my poor old mother is now praying in yonder wilderness for her ungodly son." He took his hat, and said, "I will never be found in such a place as this again," and left the company. To be short, the Lord converted his soul. Mr. Irish, his pastor, baptized him. He was soon after taken ill, and died very happy. Praying breath is never spent in vain.—*American Baptist Magazine.*

and consistent piety, is recorded in the life of the late venerable minister of the Gospel, Mr. Scott. His son observes, "To his constant and edifying observance of family worship, in connection with the steady consistent spirit and conduct, which they could not fail to remark in him, is, I am persuaded, very much to be traced, not only the blessing of God, which I trust has descended on his own family, but the further striking and important fact, that in very few instances has any person passed any length of time under his roof, without appearing to be brought permanently under the influence of religious principle. And yet it was not much his practice to address himself closely and minutely, as some have done with very good effect, to such persons individually. It was not so much by preaching directly to them, as *by living before them*, making an edifying use of incidents and occasions, and being so constantly instructive, devout, and benevolent in family worship, that, under the blessing of God, he produced so striking an impression upon them."

Consider too, that in training up children in the way of piety, you may be diffusing good for ages to come. Many are the instances in which God has so blessed these exertions, that for age after age the stream of piety has continued to flow. One generation after another has caught the sacred flame, has felt the sacred principle, and though religion flows not in the blood, yet it has descended, like a fair inheritance, from parent to child, through a long succession of years. One instance of this kind, out of myriads, occurs in the case of the celebrated John Wesley. His mother was a pious woman, the daughter of an eminent noncon-

formist minister. He again was descended from a religious mother, who took so much care of his education, that he was under serious impressions so early, that he declared he knew not the time when he was unconverted. In this instance we see religion flowing on through four generations, and had we information to trace it farther back, might probably trace it for many more. On the other hand, a parent who neglects training up his children in the way of life, may be a principal means of diffusing ignorance and wretchedness, guilt and damnation, among his descendants for generations to come.

§ 7. Though the remarks here made have a peculiar reference to the effect of parental example and instruction, yet let them not be confined to that only. The influence of displaying piety at home is felt, and may be great, whatever be the situation which the disciple of Jesus fills. When one member of an irreligious family has been converted, if that member has adorned the Gospel, has united piety, prudence, and prayer, it has often led to the conversion of many others. Some years ago I knew a youth awakened to the importance of religion, and deeply impressed with his own condition. He began to inquire for the path of peace; others of his family imitated his example. He joined the Christian church; two brothers older than himself, and two other relatives, connected with them by marriage, soon followed him. He has finished his course in hope, and his friends, it is trusted, are now walking in the way of peace.

The child may win the parent.* I know a young

* The child may win the parent. The following proof of this occurred not long since in the United States: "Two daughters

disciple of the Savior who, when she set out in religion, had parents who were both of them strangers to the Gospel of salvation. But to see her child embrace religion while she knew it not, impressed the mother's heart, and under God was a means of leading her to inquire for the grace of life. She soon became a mem-

of an irreligious father, while away from home, embraced religion. The father alarmed, immediately sent for them home, but before the messenger reached them they had made their lasting choice, and found the peace the world cannot give. They returned to their father's—not overwhelmed (as he expected) with gloom and despondency, but with countenances beaming with a heavenly serenity and celestial hope.

"They told their father what the Lord had done for their souls—that they were pilgrims here—they kept in view the bright fields of promise as they traversed this desert of sin, and were looking for that city which hath foundations.

"Soon after their return home they were anxious to esta blish family worship. They affectionately requested their father to commence that duty. He replied that he saw no use in it. He had lived very well more than fifty years without prayer, and he could not be burdened with it now. They then asked permission to pray with the family themselves. Not thinking they would have confidence to do it, he assented to the proposition.

"The duties of the day being ended, and the hour for retiring to rest having arrived, the sisters drew forward the stand, placed on it the *Bible*—one read a chapter—they both kneeled—the other engaged in prayer. The father stood, and while the humble, fervent prayer of his daughter was ascending on devotion's wings to heaven, his knees began to tremble, his nerves, which had been gathering strength for half a century, could no longer support him—he also kneeled, and then became prostrate on the floor. God heard their prayer, and directed their father's weeping eyes (which had never shed tears of penitence before) to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world."

ber of the church to which her daughter had been previously united.

The wife may win the husband; the husband the wife. Were it necessary, cases of this description might be mentioned, for they are many. In the same way a pious master may produce incalculable good among those he employs. If he considers himself, as he should do, lying under a solemn responsibility with respect to his servants, and if he labor and pray for their conversion, his servants may have reason to eternity to bless the hour which brought them under his pious care.

Even the servant may win the employer. The effect of piety in persons in humble life may be great on those in circumstances far above theirs. A pleasing instance of this kind has already been mentioned in chapter vii. § 6, note.

§ 8. Besides all that has been urged, there are many other considerations which should impress on your heart the importance of showing piety in your own home. If you would not be stained with the hateful crime of hypocrisy you must act this part. For surely no hypocrisy, is more hateful, and none more mischievous, than theirs who abroad seem pious, but at home manifest little or nothing of the influence of religion.

If you would not eternally undo your nearest friends and dearest relatives, you must show piety at home. Are you the child of parents who are strangers to religion; and do you profess it? They will form their idea of religion from you. If they see you gentle and humble, affectionate and kind, patient of injury and prompt to good, and shining in all the graces of the Gospel, it will recommend religion to them, and per-

haps lead them to the Savior and to heaven. But if they see you proud, passionate, quarrelsome, unkind, and disobedient, what will they think of your religion? What will your conduct do but seal them up under darkness and impenitence to the judgment of the great day? And at that day they may charge you, as a wicked murderer, with having kept them in darkness, and contributed to damn them to eternity.

It is an awful fact, that where persons profess religion, and yet honor it not by their conduct, they contribute in a dreadful degree to harden their own children or nearest relatives against the truth. Few are so hardened as the children of those professors of religion that display not piety at home. It is far better to be the child of a profligate than the child of an inconsistent professor of the Gospel. The child of a profligate, however nurtured in vice, is not hardened against the Gospel by seeing his parents profess it with their lips, but disregard it in their life; and thus, by being continually taught at home, to believe all religion hypocrisy. Hence there is more hope of the conversion of a profligate's child than of the child of unholy professors of the Gospel.

The effects of professing religion without displaying piety at home, are thus awful and dreadful in the extreme. Some years ago an aged minister stated to me, that in early life he spent some years under the roof of a person who was a popular preacher of the Gospel, and who was the instrument of awakening many from a state of carelessness and sin. But while thus successful abroad in turning many to righteousness, at home he displayed little of the influence of religion.

Family prayer was seldom or never practiced in his house. He gave way to harsh and violent tempers. He had six children; but alas! there was not reason to believe that even one of them became a follower of the Savior. They went on, driven, as it were, to perdition by their father's unholy conduct. Thus it is that persons who profess religion, but do not honor it in their own families, entail on their friends or their children hardness of heart, and profligacy or infidelity in this world, and eternal enmity to God and endless damnation in the world which is to come.

§ 9. How will relatives meet the relatives their unholy conduct has ruined! How will unholy parents meet their injured children at the tremendous bar of final judgment! Ah, in that day, friends united here in nature's strongest, dearest ties, but not united in the ties of grace, must part asunder to meet no more for ever. Families that once met around the same hearth, sat around the same table, and passed the best and happiest years of life beneath the same roof, must separate to an infinite and eternal distance. One part rising high in glory in the blissful climes of heaven, the other sunk deep in eternal despair in the pit of fire and wo. The parents in heaven, and their once beloved children in hell; or perhaps the children welcomed by the Judge of all to life and bliss, and their unholy, unhappy parents doomed to all the horrors of eternal night. Brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, here much and mutually beloved, when they leave this world must frequently separate for ever. One crowned with glory, will join the family of the first-born, the other sink beneath a load of unforgiven sin to misery and despair. They who once were united in such fond attachment,

now united no more. They part, and part for ever. They pursued their journey in union through the little span of time, but now, while some exult in all the light, and love and joy of life eternal, their once beloved associates, swept into the gulf of perdition, feel nothing but guilt, remorse, despair, and wretchedness, and anticipate not one bright moment in the dreary ages of an eternal night. O, my friend, can you bear the thought of such a separation between yourself and those you hold most dear? Do you not tremble at the idea of so dismal a parting from the child you tenderly love; or the dear parent you revere; or the brothers or sisters who have been the affectionate companions of your youthful hours; or the husband or the wife that is now the fond soother of your care? Yet if you are devoted to Jesus, and they are not, it must come. How should the dreadful idea add fervor to your prayers, and life to your endeavors, to snatch them as brands from the burning! But perhaps they are consecrated to the Savior and you are not. O can you bear to be the wretched outcast? to see your child or your parent, your brother or your sister, your husband or your wife, ascend to heaven, while you, with a broken heart, look after them in vain? to see them rise to glory and eternal life, while you sink to darkness, misery, and despair? If the thought is dreadful, what will be the reality? Flee from the dreadful heart-breaking wo, and make their God and Father yours.*

* Perhaps a brief but impressive narrative may add force to these remarks. "I have known," said a pious father, "the grace of God for nearly thirty years; but in spite of all my advice, my five sons and two daughters, all grown up, ran on in the broad way to destruction. This cost me many a prayer

§ 10. How *happy* is that family where all, united in the Savior's love, are traveling together to eternal life! What prayers, what labors of love will not such a prospect recompense! It is true, death will tear that family asunder, and snatch one by one, till all the once happy circle are snatched away; yet they are cheered with the bright prospect of forming a family again, where adieus and farewells are a sound unknown. How sweet is their united devotion, when

"Kneeling down to heaven's eternal King,
"The saint, the father, and the husband prays;
"Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing,
"That thus they all shall meet in future days.
"There ever bask in uncreated rays,
"No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
"For ever singing their Redeemer's praise
"In such society, but still more dear,
"While circling time moves round in one eternal sphere."

and tear, yet I saw no fruit of all my labors. In January last I dreamed that the day of judgment was come. I saw the Judge on his great white throne, the holy angels sitting around him, and all nations gathered before him. I and my wife were on the right hand, but I could not see my children.

"I then thought that I must go and seek them; so I went to the left hand, and found them all standing together, tearing their hair, beating their breasts, and cursing the day that they were born. As soon as they saw me they all caught hold of me, and said, 'O father, we will part no more!' I said, 'My dear children, I am come to try, if possible, to get you out of this dismal situation.' So I took them all with me; but when we were come within a bowshot of the Judge, I thought he cast an angry look, and said, 'What do thy children with thee now? they would not take thy warning when upon earth: they shall not share the crown with thee. Depart, ye cursed!' At these words I awoke, bathed in sweat and tears. A few days after this, as we were sitting all together on a Sabbath evening, I related my dream to them. No sooner did I begin, but

How sweet will be their future union! O blessed day, when they who associated below shall meet in realms above! Blessed day, when they who mingled sorrows here shall meet to mingle raptures there! when they who shared together the trials of earth, shall share in sweeter union the triumphs of heaven! For ever safe! for ever and for ever blest! far from every evil! far from every grief! No longer soothers of each other's wo, but partakers of each other's felicity! Assaulted by temptation, afflicted by calamity, stained by sin, humbled by imperfection, alarmed by danger, never more! Security is their privilege, as happiness is their portion. The boisterous storms of time cannot follow them, sheltered safe from every storm. The blasts of affliction shall beat no more on their now peaceful home. The inroads of disease shall no more alarm, nor the assaults of death break their eternal union. The time for these things will be no longer. These began and ended in the field of mortal existence; but the peaceful mansions of the blest are for ever sheltered from them. Happy tranquillity, which nothing through eternal ages can disturb! lasting harmony, which nothing can dissolve! delightful security, which nothing through eternity shall ever alarm! and happy,

first one, then another, yea, all of them, burst into tears, and God fastened conviction on their hearts. Five of them are now rejoicing in God their Savior. I believe God is at work with the other two; so that I doubt not that he will give them also to my prayers." This good old saint, before he exchanged time for eternity, had the happiness of seeing the remainder of his children converted to the truth as it is in Jesus, and adorning the doctrine of God our Savior by useful lives.

happy union, which shall continue unbroken, while the infinite periods of an eternal day are rolling for ever along! Blessed family! with what melody will they join the everlasting song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto HIM that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the LAMB for ever and ever!"

O, my friend, with such inducements, who that feels the Savior's love, and true affection for his beloved connections, would not wish to show piety at home!

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE SABBATH, AND ITS IMPROVEMENT.

§ 1. Of all the instructions designed by heavenly mercy to promote the temporal and eternal welfare of mankind, there is no one of such immense importance, and productive of such immense benefits, as the Sabbath. "Wherever the Sabbath is not, there is no worship, no religion. Man forgets God, and God forsakes man." Where the Sabbath is not regarded, man degenerates to a brute, a heathen, an infidel, or an atheist; and hastens, with a rapid step, to a scene where he will bear all the character and all the features of a fiend. Where the Sabbath is loved, venerated, and improved, peace smiles, hope blooms, piety matures and

ripens, and the soul hastens onward to the period when the Sabbaths of time shall be exchanged for the long Sabbath of eternity.

§ 2. God, *at the beginning of time*, appointed a Sabbath. This solemn season for rest and religion he ordained should then be the seventh day. "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." There is reason to believe that this day was regarded as sacred by the patriarchs, and it is decisively clear that it was esteemed holy before the time when the law was given at Sinai. For some time before that period, Moses is described as speaking to the Israelites respecting it, and speaking of it not as if it were a new institution, but one well known to them. "He said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord."

When the Lord with appalling and terrible majesty gave the law from Mount Sinai, the observation of the Sabbath was the subject of one of the ten precepts that he delivered on that tremendous occasion. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it."

This solemn law of the Most High does not appear to have been introduced at this time as a new law, but

as a law referring to a subject with which the Israelites were well acquainted. REMEMBER the Sabbath day. This phraseology implies that they were acquainted with the day and with the law which they were now solemnly commanded to regard.

§ 3. With respect to the *change* of the Sabbath from the seventh day of the week to the first, it may be observed, that the Lord Jesus Christ was Lord of the Sabbath, and consequently possessed authority to alter the day on which the Sabbath is to be observed: "The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day;" and that the Scriptures lead us to believe that he, or his divinely inspired apostles, did make such alteration.

The first day of the week was the day on which the Lord Jesus, after his resurrection, repeatedly appeared to his disciples. John, 20 : 19–26. It was the day on which the Gospel was first preached, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and on which several thousands were converted, and a wide foundation laid for the Christian church. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." And the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. This fact is peculiarly remarkable. If the Most High had designed the seventh day to be continued as the day for public worship, can it with any reason be supposed that the abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit, which qualified the apostles to preach for the FIRST time what is *strictly* the Gospel, should have been made on the first day? and that the first day of the week should have been the day honored by the first

preaching of the Gospel, and by the conversion of thousands? Did not this procedure of the Lord God mark out the first day of the week, as the day on which he designed the Gospel of Jesus to be most extensively and successfully preached?

The first day of the week was the day on which the disciples united in that most solemn act of worship, the supper of the Lord. "And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight." The argument for the first day being the Lord's day, which is furnished in this verse, is peculiarly forcible, in consequence of its being expressly stated that the apostle and his companions abode *seven* days, or one week at Troas. If the seventh day of the week, in which the apostle arrived at Troas, had been the day devoted to public worship, he was there to engage in its sacred exercises; but instead of the account stating that any thing of this kind took place on that day, it passes that day over in silence, and records, that on the first day of the following week the disciples met for that solemn act of worship, the Lord's Supper, and that *then* the apostle preached unto them.

The first day of the week was the day on which the disciples were directed to make their charitable contributions for their suffering friends. 1 Cor. 16 : 2.

There cannot be a reasonable doubt that the first day is the day distinguished by the appellation of the

Lord's day, by the apostle John, in the Revelation. "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day." The name applied to the day expresses its peculiar design. It is the Lord's day. Other days are allotted to man for attention to the needful concerns of this transitory world; but this day is peculiarly the Lord's, a day to be devoted to his worship and glory. It may be said, indeed, that all days are his. They are in one sense; but so is all creation. The cattle on a thousand hills are his; yet the Jewish husbandman was allowed to esteem his cattle his own; but if a part of his herd were presented as a sacrifice to God, that part, though in one sense the Lord's before, was now esteemed as set apart in a peculiar way for God. So with the Christian every day should be the Lord's; but while he claims one day as more peculiarly his own, it suggests that that day is to be set apart from common for sacred purposes, as the beast presented for the sacrifice was no longer its former owner's, but the Lord's.

Though to look to ancient Christian writers for arguments in support of institutions which the Scriptures do not mention, is to dishonor the word of God, and to open a wide door to superstition; yet it is not unpleasant to trace in the writings of very early Christians further accounts of institutions which the Scriptures do record. Justin Martyr, who wrote his Apology at hardly the distance of fifteen years from the time of the apostle John, observes, "And in every eucharistical sacrifice we bless the Maker of all things, through his Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Spirit; and upon the day called Sunday, all that live either in city or country meet together at the same place, where the writings of the apostles and prophets

are read, as much as time will give leave; when the reader has done, the bishop makes a sermon, wherein he instructs the people, and animates them to the practice of such lovely precepts; at the conclusion of this discourse we all rise up together and pray: and prayers being over, as I now said, there is bread, and wine, and water offered; and the bishop, as before, sends up prayers and thanksgivings with all the fervency he is able, and the people conclude all with a joyful acclamation of Amen: then the consecrated elements are distributed to and partaken of by all that are present, and sent to the absent by the hands of the deacons.

"But the wealthy and the willing, for every one is at liberty, contribute as they think fitting, and this collection is deposited with the bishop, and out of this he relieves the orphan and the widow, and such as are reduced to want by sickness or any other cause, and such as are in bonds, and strangers that come from far; and in a word, he is the guardian and almoner of all the indigent.

"Upon Sunday we all assemble, that being the first day in which God set himself to work upon the dark void, in order to make the world, and in which Jesus Christ our Savior rose again from the dead; for the day before Saturday he was crucified, and the day after, which is Sunday, he appeared to his apostles and disciples, and taught them what I have now proposed to your consideration."

§ 4. With respect to the *way of observing* the Sabbath, it is to be set apart for God. It is the Lord's day, and not yours. The *day* is the Lord's, not merely the morning, or the afternoon, or the evening, but the day.

The command is not, Remember the Sabbath morning to keep it holy, or the Sabbath afternoon; but the Sabbath day. And so we are informed of the early Christians, that they spent a great part of the day together, engaged in those solemn exercises which were ripening them for a Sabbath above. The day should be begun with God, be carried on with God, and be ended with God. Private prayer, family devotion, self-examination and meditation; reading the Scriptures, visiting the sick, public worship, and the religious instruction of the young, and if a parent, of your own children, are the engagements that should occupy the Sabbath. If at the head of a family, you are commanded by God to let your servants and your cattle rest; and if you are employing these, you as much profane the Sabbath as if employed yourself.

The ways in which this sacred day is profaned are innumerable. Some profane it by buying, selling, traveling or amusements. To such the words apply,

"What evil thing is this ye do,
"Who God's peculiar day profane;
"Your calling's common work pursue,
"Your journeys, sports, and pleasures vain?
"Ye buy the curse of God!—ye sell
"Your souls to sin, the world, and hell!"

The Sabbath is profaned in numberless instances by attending to household business, that should be done on Saturday or left till Monday. It is profaned by bakers busy at their ovens; by farmers employing their servants in work not absolutely essential to the well-being of their cattle; by reading improper books, not only books of a profligate tendency, but books not cal-

culated to promote the power of vital piety, as works in science, in history, or on mere speculative subjects in theology.

The Sabbath is profaned in an awful degree by the indulgence of improper thoughts, and by conversation of a description unsuitable to the day. What has the Christian, who should be improving the Sabbath as a means of meetening the soul for heaven, to do on the Lord's day with politics? with the state of the nation? with tattling about the affairs of families? with the state of trade? with fashions, with diversions? Are these subjects for such a day, and for creatures who have a heaven to gain, a hell to escape, a God to glorify, an eternity before them, and but a few Sabbaths to improve? Yet what more common! What else do many professors of religion on the Lord's day converse about? Many hearers of the Gospel scarcely leave the house of prayer before they begin discoursing on these or other mere worldly subjects.

A short and expressive account of the mode in which the Sabbath should be spent is furnished in the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah; and an important promise connected with it: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Nothing merely of a ceremonial nature

appears in this description, and though the latter part of the passage contained a promise more immediately applicable to Israel, yet the promise, "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord," is so naturally connected with the solemn improvement of the Lord's day, that it may justly be viewed as made to all who pursue the practice previously required.

§ 5. Now allow me affectionately to urge upon you a devout, a strict improvement of this holy day. All that is dear to you as an immortal being, all that you are anxious to promote, if indeed a Christian, enforce such observance. "To this institution," says Dr. Dwight, "we owe far the greater part of the spiritual blessings which we enjoy; and in a high sense, we owe them all. But for this day, we should neither have sought, nor secured, eternal life; for where no Sabbath is, there is no religion. But for this day, earthly things would have engrossed all our thoughts. But for this day, the world, as a canker, would rust, corrupt, and consume all the dispositions to piety, and all the hopes of heaven. The soul would be benumbed. Religion would die. God would be forgotten. The death of Christ would be vain. Mankind would cease to be saved; and heaven would fail of her destined inhabitants. How desolate the prospect! How strongly would this world resemble the regions of final despair! where no Sabbath dawns; where no prayers nor praises ascend; no sermons proclaim pardon and peace to sinners; the voice of mercy never sounds; and the smiles of forgiving, redeeming, and sanctifying love never illume the dreary valley of the shadow of death!"

§ 6. A strictly religious improvement of the Sabbath

will be fraught with incalculable blessings to *yourself.* It will counteract the influence of the world; it will strengthen every grace; it will nourish the flame of holy love, and mature your soul for all the enjoyments of the heavenly world. Judge Hale observes, "I have found by a strict and diligent observation, that the due observing the duties of this day hath ever had joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time, and the week that hath been so begun hath been blessed and prosperous to me. And on the other hand, when I have been negligent of the duties of this day, the rest of the week hath been unsuccessful and unhappy to my secular employments. So that I could easily make an estimate of my successes in my own secular employments the week following, by the manner of passing this day: and this I do not write lightly or inconsiderately, but upon a long and sound observation and experience."

§ 7. To strengthen and deepen your impressions of the immense importance of the strict observance of the Lord's day, look at what passes around you, think of your obligations *to God*, and contemplate the scenes before you.

Look at what passes around you. Some will tell you that a strict observance of the Sabbath is superstitious; but observe their character. Can you point to *one* of this description that displays any eminence in piety? Do their affections seem heavenly? their hopes bright? their souls devout? Are they zealous and devout followers of the Lord? Rather, are they not those, whose profession of religion is a cold, barren, heartless, worthless thing? Are these they with whom you would wish

to die? and when they quit this transient world, would you wish your soul in their soul's place?

Look at others, whose piety is elevated, whose zeal is warm, whose faith is strong, whose hopes are bright who live as strangers here, and as travelers to glory, and whose souls are ripening apace for heaven; to whom religion is their meat and drink, their pleasure and their all: these are they that reverence the Lord's day, and strictly improve its holy hours. Would you not wish to die their death, and to have your soul gathered with theirs? Then imitate their example. The rule of the Lord Jesus, "By their fruits ye shall know them," may be applied here. Eminent piety is uniformly connected with the devout and strict observation of the Lord's day: and the want of a strict improvement of the holy day is, even where a profession of religion is made, as uniformly connected with lukewarmness or hypocrisy.

Think of your obligations to God. Does he, who gives you every day, and from whom you hope for immortality, require too much, when he bids you consecrate to him one day in seven? Had he condescended to ask you what portion of your time you would solemnly set apart for his peculiar service, would you have thought of less? could you have thought of so *little?* Part of the Sabbath is employed in receiving needful support, and were a person, from fourteen years of age to sixty, to spend ten hours every Sabbath in employments of a strictly religious nature, in a life of sixty years the time thus employed would by no means amount to three whole years; and is this much in such a life to consecrate to such a friend? Besides

while the Lord thus claims the day, he intends the profit of the day for you.

Think of what is before you—a dying day and an eternal world. And when you come to quit this transitory world, will you then repent of having improved the Lord's day with the most strict devotion? Will you then wish to have trifled away in idle conversation, or vain amusement, or worldly science, its sacred hours? Rather, would not the recollection of Sabbaths thus passed fill the hour of death with alarm, and plant with thorns your dying pillow? What way of spending the Lord's day will yield you most pleasure in death and eternity? Only spend it in that way. Spend it as you will wish in your last hours to have done. Spend it as a traveler hasting to eternity. Remember that every Sabbath which passes leaves you one less to improve, and one more to account for; and consider, that for all an account must soon be rendered before the bar of the Eternal. Sabbaths improved are precious blessings; but wasted Sabbaths are dreadful curses. O spend them as one who knows that every Sabbath, as it finishes, leaves you one Sabbath nearer heaven or hell! O improve them as you should do if you wish to be blessed with an eternal Sabbath when Sabbaths below are gone for ever.

§ 8. In addition to all these considerations, it is no inconsiderable motive for a strict observance of the Lord's day, that this may have the happiest effects in *promoting religion.* I have heard a respectable minister of the Gospel relate a striking fact illustrative of this observation. A solicitor had a law-suit in hand, which was expected to come to trial on Monday morning. Several signatures were necessary to some papers

which were to be obtained previously to the trial; and on the Lord's day before the expected day of trial he applied to a lady, a member of a dissenting church, for her signature. She refused to give it on the Sabbath, but was willing to sign the requisite deed the next morning. In vain he tried to move her from her resolution. All his influence failed; she was immovable. He then applied to two other persons, also members of a dissenting church in London, but met with a similar reception: they were willing to sign as soon as he pleased in the morning, but would not sign on the Lord's day. The effect of this consistent conduct on their part was very pleasing. He discerned the effect of religion; it led him to reflection; he perceived his own want of religion; and the affair issued in his conversion. He became a firm friend of the Gospel; was the principal, if not the sole instrument in erecting a house of prayer in his own neighborhood, and afterwards was a principal supporter of the interests of religion there. Such is one out of many instances of the happy effects produced where Christians let their light shine before men.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON PRIZING AND SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES.

§ 1. A most important help in the way to eternal life is the regular and devout perusal of the sacred Scrip-

tures. They are an inestimable treasure, and of all books should be your chief and most beloved companion. They are to the disciples of Jesus a light for their feet, a lamp for their paths. To search them is an express Christian duty. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you RICHLY, with all wisdom." "Search the Scriptures." You are commanded not merely to *read* the Scriptures, but to read them with such attention that your mind may be amply stored with their divine instructions. The precept, "Search the Scriptures," is peculiarly emphatic; it signifies to search them as a miner searches a mine for jewels or for gold; thus dig into the sacred mine, and search for the precious treasures it contains.

With respect to the doctrines and duties of religion, make the word of God your sole guide and reject all human traditions. The Lord Jesus taught his disciples how to treat human traditions on religious subjects, when he condemned a regard to those of the elders. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." The doctrines of the Bible are the doctrines you are to believe. The duties enjoined in the Bible are the duties you are to practice; and all the additions which the traditions of men or human authority make are not worth a rush; and often become the occasions of sin, when men reject the commandment of God to keep their own tradition.

As the word of God is thus in religion to be your sole guide, so you are required to add nothing to it, and from it to take nothing. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the command-

ments of the Lord your God which I command you." "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."

§ 2 To read the Scriptures profitably, read them with a *docile and humble mind*, and with a desire to receive spiritual instruction from them. "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the humble."

To read the Scriptures profitably, guard against their sin and folly who wrest the word of God, who reject its distinguishing doctrines because they are mysterious, and whose self-conceit and wicked pride, while they prevent them from learning of the Savior, are leading them to perdition. "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain." "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

To read the Scriptures profitably, always read them with prayer for divine instruction. "They shall all be taught of God." "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

§ 3. Many are the inducements presented in the Scriptures for such devout attention to their sacred contents. They are in truth "the word of God;" the word of Jehovah; "the oracles of God;" "the word of Christ." The truths revealed are spoken by God, "who hath spoken to us by his Son." "For all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine,

for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." "The holy Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus." They are "the word of God's grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." "Heaven and earth shall pass away," but Christ's "word shall not pass away." "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." Error springs from a neglect of the Scriptures. "Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures?" They promote holiness and peace here, as well as lead to heaven hereafter. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way." "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honey comb." They who improve this sacred book, shall enjoy in a peculiar degree their Creator's favor. "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; but to this man will I look, to him that is of a poor and contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word."

§ 4. As you desire happiness, let the word of God be your ever dear delight. You cannot prize the blessed book sufficiently. Had it been brought you from

heaven, in an angel's hand, it could not have been a more precious prize, or a surer guide to immortality. Suppose that but one in the world had been blessed with this treasure, that salvation had been offered to but one, and that this divine book had been sent to that one, to guide him in his way to heaven, how would the rest of mankind have envied that one! Happy person to possess the promise of eternal life beyond the dark shades of death! and to see heavenly day dawning beyond the gloom of the grave! O, had but one possessed this treasure, how would all besides have desired his lot! how would they have wished that the path to heaven were open to them also! How would multitudes have longed to enjoy, with the possessor of this single Bible, the sweet hope of immortality; and could that one have sold his treasure, how eagerly might all the monarchs of the earth have contended who should purchase the invaluable good! O consider, the Bible is as precious a treasure now as it would be if there were but one Bible in the world! As surely will it guide that happy possessor to heaven, who with childlike docility makes it his perpetual guide.*

* The justly celebrated Sir William Jones, one of the brightest geniuses and most distinguished scholars of the eighteenth century, observes, "I have carefully and regularly perused these holy Scriptures, and am of opinion that the volume, independently of its divine origin, contains more sublimity, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains of eloquence, than can be collected from ALL other books, in whatever language they may have been written." It is related that the eminent English poet Collins, in the latter part of his mortal career, "withdrew from study, and traveled with no other book than an English Testament, such as children carry to school. When a friend took it into his hand, out of curiosity, to see what

§ 5. The Bible has been the instrument of producing all the true piety that has for many ages existed upon earth. Were the world deprived of the sun, light and heat, and life, would expire for want of its vivifying beams, and all would become one mass of barrenness and death. Were the world deprived of the Bible, it would soon present one deplorable scene of unmingled wickedness. Nothing would meet the eye but pollution and crime. Hell might exult in a complete conquest, and claim this world as a province of its own. Among the myriads of mankind not one heir of heaven would be found; but all, thronging to destruction together, would rush from the darkness of spiritual night to the darkness of eternal perdition. It may confidently be asserted, that no one who slights the Bible is virtuous; and that no one who loves it, feels its power on the heart, and conforms to its precepts, is vicious. Infidels may rave at such assertions: let them rave. They are monuments of the truth, which excites their indignation. They show what man is when he slights the Bible.

Let it never be forgotten by you, that those Christians whose piety has shone with the brightest lustre, whose hopes have been fullest of immortality, are those

companion a man of letters had chosen—'I have only one book,' said he, 'but that is the best.'"—*Johnson's Lives of the Poets*, vol. iv. John Locke, so distinguished as a philosopher, in the latter part of his life studied scarcely any thing but the word of God; and when asked which was the surest way for a young man to attain a knowledge of the Christian religion, he replied, "Let him study the *Holy Scriptures*, especially the *New Testament*. Therein are contained the words of eternal life. It hath GOD for its author—SALVATION for its end—and TRUTH, without any mixture of error, for its matter."

who have loved and valued most the word of God. It is related of De Renty, a French nobleman of most eminent piety, that he used every day on his knees to read three chapters in the word of God. On the other hand, how many Christians of even eminent piety, when leaving the world, have lamented their folly in not having studied the Scriptures more, and human writings less. "When Salmasius, who was one of the most consummate scholars of his time, came to the close of life, he saw cause to exclaim bitterly against himself. 'O!' said he, 'I have lost a world of time! time, the most precious thing in the world! whereof had I but one year more, it should be spent in David's Psalms and Paul's Epistles! O! sirs,' said he again to those about him, 'mind the world less, and God more!'"* When that eminent Christian, James Hervey, who died in triumph, "apprehended himself to be near the close of life, with eternity full in view, he wrote to a friend at a distance to tell him what were his sentiments in that awful situation. 'I have been too fond,' said he, 'of reading every thing valuable and elegant that has been penned in our language, and been peculiarly charmed with the historians, orators, and poets of antiquity; but were I to renew my studies, I would take my leave of those accomplished trifles: I would resign the delights of modern wits, amusement and eloquence, and devote my attention to the Scriptures of Truth. I would sit with much greater assiduity at my divine Master's feet, and desire to know nothing in comparison of Jesus Christ, and him crucified.'"

§ 6. Consider the Scriptures as a message from God

* Simpson's Plea for Religion.

to you on the most momentous subjects. A new world is here presented to you. An amazing eternity appears to overwhelm the poor moments of time. Life is a span, and death is the way to an immense unmeasured life. Read the message of your God: the discoveries that it makes, it makes to you. To you it points out a second life; to you it unveils an eternal world. Your thoughts it leads beyond the grave. The judgment it discloses, is that at which you must appear. To you God in it reveals a Savior and a heaven, the gift of redeeming love; or a hell, the dire desert of sin. To your view he presents the spirits of the just, washed in the blood of the Lamb, and triumphing in the fullness of joy; and bids you be not slothful, but a follower of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

§ 7. What is there in human science compared with discoveries so important? What is there in the letters of friends, the dearest and the best beloved, compared with that book, which is an epistle from your God? What are those studies on which youth is so often employed, and much of manhood spent, compared with the knowledge of *that* book—that one book, which God has given? that one book, which guides the soul to lasting peace? that one book, which disperses the shadows, clouds, and darkness, that hang over the grave? that one book, which directs those who love its truth. to glory and honor that will endure when "stars and sun have lost their light?"

There is one view in which the Scriptures are important beyond all expression. They are the *only* guide to eternal life. When we contemplate an eternal state,

the most momentous concerns of a few vain years dwindle into insignificance. Health or sickness, pain or ease, liberty or slavery, life or death, appear the merest trifles, compared with those awful and amazing scenes which await man beyond the grave. Then what is learning? what is human science? when in a few short years all must be forgotten in the dust! How different that knowledge which the word of God imparts! That extends its blessings onward, and will diffuse unfading good in ages so remote in the depths of eternity, that no human thought ever reached, no human calculation ever approached them. Or think of appearing in the presence of God—a deathless spirit, appearing to receive a doom that never can be changed! All the boasted wisdom of human science can afford you no aid in the awful prospect; but there is one book, one precious though oft neglected book, that discovers all we need to know. Should not that book be prized? That book is the Bible. Other books are for time, but this for eternity! other knowledge amuses a few short moments here, this directs to never-ending good hereafter! Other wisdom pleases or profits for the transient day of life, this is the source of unfailing blessings for infinite periods beyond the hour when stars and sun shall cease to shine, and "rolling years shall cease to move." Other learning may gain the applause which must soon be hushed for ever by the hand of death; but divine knowledge will direct the soul to the raptures of eternal day, and insure the approbation of the King of kings, and the welcome congratulations of angelic myriads, in the presence of Him who is, and who was, and who is to come; the Eternal, the Almighty. Thus, as much as eternity excels time in im-

portance, as much as an infinite life of bliss outweighs the advantages of a fleeting hour; so much the precious Bible excels in value all that orators, philosophers, historians and poets ever wrote, all that human wisdom ever inspired, all that a vain world ever extolled.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

§ 1. Before the Lord Jesus left our world he instituted the sacred ordinance, in which to the end of time there was to be a commemoration of his dying love. Three of the evangelists have recorded the institution of this important ordinance. The substance of their accounts when united into one, furnishes an impressive view of its obligation and design. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body,* which is given for you: THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME."† "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of

* Matt. 26: 26. † Luke, 21: 19.

sins;* and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God."†

After the holy Jesus had left this world, and returned to his eternal throne, he communicated by divine revelation, to the apostle Paul, an account of the institution and design of this ordinance.‡§

Can a Christian, who feels unspeakable obligations to the adorable Savior, read these impressive portions of the word of God and not perceive his duty, and the most powerful motives for obedience?

"Do this in remembrance of me." Can any command be more plain, more positive, more reasonable, or more important? Do this—Attendance at the Lord's table is not a subject left to human choice; but to

* Matt. 26 : 27, 28. † Mark, 14 : 23—25. ‡ 1 Cor. 11 : 23—29.

§ The reader of the sacred volume who makes that holy book his guide, may find in the brief scriptural statements respecting this holy ordinance, a sufficient antidote to the principal errors that have been broached respecting it. Popery maintains that the wafer its priests offer is the body and blood of Christ, and has murdered myriads for rejecting this monstrous absurdity: the Scriptures declare that it was *bread* which Jesus took and brake. Popery reserves the wine for its antichristian priests, and withholds the cup from the people: Jesus said, Drink ye *all* of it; and his apostle describes the members of the Corinthian church as drinking of the cup as well as eating of the bread. No absurdity however can be too great, no abomination too vile, no superstition too heathenish, and no cruelty too atrocious for popery, which the Scriptures represent as the mother of harlots and abominations, and which an able writer, Mr. Cecil, described as Satan's masterpiece.

every disciple of Jesus his express and solemn command is—Do this. And the command has sanctions superior to those of even his other precepts. It was uttered almost by his dying lips. It was given the same night in which he was betrayed; and after his ascension was repeated in the revelation made to the apostle Paul. To neglect this ordinance is thus far to reject the authority of the Lord of heaven, and to violate an express and positive command, enforced by the most solemn sanctions that even the word of God contains. If then you can neglect the Savior's table, where is your faith, your love, your obedience?

§ 2. When the *design* of this ordinance is considered, the subject is presented in a still more impressive light. On the one hand, obedience is enforced by motives springing from its design, and pleasing in the extreme; on the other, disobedience appears peculiarly flagrant, because it resists all those charming and impressive motives. Behold the Son of God instituting this holy ordinance. The last night of his life has arrived. The traitor has gone out to betray him. The bloody agony of Gethsemane, and the horrors of the cross, are in sight. He is about to interpose himself as a spotless victim between an apostate world and offended justice. The intolerable load of the sins of countless millions is going to press him down with a weight which none but he could bear. All this is to be borne before another sun shall rise and set. He knows it, yet, full of heavenly love, forgets his own sorrows that he may minister to the comfort of his flock. In that last awful night he broke the bread, and poured out the wine, and said, This do in remembrance of me. Cold is the heart that can forget him. Cold the

heart that delights not to cherish the remembrance of such a friend. Follow him from the table where he broke the bread, to the cross on which he died. There he atones for sins numberless as the drops of morning dew, and vast as the mountains that pierce the skies. There he brings in an everlasting righteousness, and opens wide the gate of heaven. There he dies, and dies that you may live, if you will believe in him; sheds his heart's blood to wash away your sins; and endures his Father's frown, that on you, a poor ruined child of death and wo, his Father may for ever smile. For you he purchased peace, by agonies intolerably severe. To you he opens heaven. Your shepherd would he be through the wilderness of time, and crown the long eternity that awaits you with glory, honor and happiness. In those many mansions in his Father's house, where he is now exalted at the right hand of power, he would give you a peaceful dwelling! In those regions, where, as the Lamb that was slain, he will lead his flock to living fountains of waters, and where God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, he would enrich you with all the treasures of eternal life. Compared with this immense benevolence, what are human benefactors, the wisest, the greatest and the best? Their kindness, when it shines brightest, and glows with the warmest fervor, is more insignificant compared with his, than the glimmering of a glow-worm compared with the meridian sun. What grateful recollections then does he deserve! All his dying love, and all his living care; all he has done for your salvation, all he is doing, all he will do through eternity, should unite to impress this precept on your heart, and to render it the most delightful precept in the book of

God: "This do in remembrance of me." Can they be Christians who hesitate to obey a precept recommended by such a design as that of remembering such a friend! Will not the Christian rather say to him, "Holy Redeemer, thou hast united my happiness and duty in bidding me remember thee. O thou divine friend! I would remember thee while memory keeps its seat within my soul; and rather let my right hand forget its cunning, let my heart forget to move, my pulse to beat, my tongue to speak, my eyes to see, than I forget thee, whose dying love procured eternal salvation for my ruined soul!"

§ 3. These considerations, on remembering Christ with gratitude and love, receive additional weight when we take into view the particular event, in his benevolent course, to which the sacred supper leads our meditations. The event was the most important in the annals of time, the most momentous in the records of eternity. We have no reason for apprehending that such another event ever did take place in eternity past, or during an eternity to come ever will. The happiness of the millions of the redeemed, and the glory of God in their salvation, through eternal ages, was suspended on his atonement. If that had not been effected, the apostate world must have been for ever lost; heaven must have closed its gates against all the inhabitants of the earth. No songs of redeeming love could ever have resounded through its blissful regions. No child of Adam could ever have become a child of God. The wisdom and love of God in man's redemption could never have been displayed. The triumphs of Satan would have been complete, and the earth have become only an ample nursery for hell.

On this one event all these others were suspended. This one was effected. Jesus died, and dying glorified the law and made it honorable, atoned for sin, and rescued the sinner. The way to heaven was then opened. Myriads, admitted there in consequence of this sacrifice, even before it was offered, were confirmed in happiness, and the way prepared to that abode for millions more. The plans of the wicked one were baffled. A display of the love and wisdom of God, that will shine bright to eternity, then commenced. Eternity may roll away its ample ages, but never will this event be forgotten; this event, to which heaven will owe all the praises of redeeming love; this event, to which multitudes, countless as the sands on the seashore, will ascribe their felicity through ages without end; this event, to which the hosts of angels will owe all their intimacies, and friendship, and mutual joy with the spirits of the just; this event, to which even God will owe all the rich revenue of glory that as the God of salvation will accrue to him through all eternity. What is the creation of man compared with this? what the formation of a world compared with this? What even the creation of cherubim and seraphim, and all the sons of light, compared with this? Their creation would never have called forth songs of eternal praise, so fervent, so lofty, so expressive of infinite benefits, as this event will elicit. And glorious as God shines when he appears the Creator of cherubim and seraphim, of angels, archangels, principalities and powers, yet their creation would never have invested him with half that glory which shines around him as a just God and yet a Savior. And shall that one amazing, astonishing, overwhelming event, the aton-

ing death of Jesus, thus be remembered to eternity in worlds of light—thus to eternity fill heaven with its sweetest praise, and invest the character of God with its most radiant glories—shall the hearts and songs of the redeemed be full of it for ever and ever—and shall we not remember it with gratitude and delight? Will you not listen to him who says, "Do this in remembrance of me?"

§ 4. Perhaps you have done it with repeated delight. Persevere: do it till he come to call you from the sorrows of time to all the blessings of eternal life. But perhaps I address one that has hitherto lived careless of this sacred ordinance, and disobedient to the Savior's will. Why do you act thus? Perhaps you reply,

Obj. 1. I apprehend I am not fit to approach the Lord's table, and partake of an ordinance so solemn.

Ans. This objection must spring either from a consciousness that you are a stranger to converting grace, or from incorrect views of the Gospel of Christ.

If you are a stranger to converting grace; if you know not what it is to flee from sin and ruin to the Savior; if you are the slave of allowed sin, then indeed you are unfit to approach this sacred table. But while this is your condition, you are unfit for heaven, and are really and truly fit for hell. The same remark will apply if you know that you are not decided in your acceptance of the Savior, but halting between him and the world; an almost-Christian, and no more. You are unfit; but then the reason is, you have no part in Christ; you are unfit for heaven, and if you die as you are, sure of not entering there.

But perhaps your fear springs from incorrect views of the Gospel. When one who professes to love and follow Christ says, I am not worthy to approach his table, it seems to show that the heart is yielding to a self-righteous bias, and that the professed believer, instead of seeking acceptance wholly in Jesus, is depending on some fancied personal worthiness. It is not as a worthy creature, but as an unworthy, yet penitent believer, that you should commemorate the Savior's death. What does the ordinance point out to you, which has any reference to a worthiness of yours? Is not its very design to remind you, that when you were yet a condemned sinner, an ungodly creature, without strength, Christ died for you? Perhaps you add,

Obj. 2. I am not absolutely convinced that it would be improper for me to attend to this holy ordinance; but I have many scruples respecting the propriety of my doing so.

Ans. Your scruples are either well founded, or without sufficient foundation. If they are well founded, you sin in living in such a state as gives occasion for them. If there is no sufficient ground for them, you sin if you do not endeavor their removal. Were you heir to a rich estate, but had some doubts about the title, would you not seek with earnestness the best advice you could obtain upon the subject? Have you done so on a subject of infinitely more importance? Have you disclosed your scruples to your minister, or other intelligent and pious persons? If you have not, it seems that the case truly is this—you care little whether you rebel against the Savior's authority, or obey his sacred precepts.

Obj. 3. It is true I have neglected communion with the church of Christ; but the cause of my neglect has been the wickedness of some that were professors of religion.

Ans. Will this excuse avail you at the day of judgment? If they have been hypocrites, will this justify you in rebellion? Suppose that the apostle Paul, when ordered by the Savior to preach the Gospel, had replied, No, Lord; in secret I will love thy Gospel, but I will never preach it; for Judas preached it once; nor will I ever join thy people; for Judas once belonged to them. What would the Savior have thought of him? If boundless mercy had not changed him, he would have been left to go on in pride and disobedience, and with all his professed love to the Gospel, to travel to perdition. If you rebel against Christ's authority because some false professors have dishonored him, take care lest this should be your case.

Obj. 4. I acknowledge that I neglect communion at the Lord's table; but the reason is, my mind is vexed and troubled by the conduct of one who attends there. He has said some very unwarrantable things about me.

Ans. Are you to fall out with the ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ because a brother or a sister has fallen out with you? Are you to disobey the Son of God, because a friend has used a harsh word respecting you, or an unkind action? Is your regard to the Lord's precepts, is your love to his ordinances, is your pleasure in remembering him, so small, that the unkind conduct of an imperfect fellow-sinner should lead you to disobey his commands, and to slight his ordinances? Blush at such weakness, and such weak attachment to the best of friends. Be assured this ob-

jection commonly springs from unmortified pride. You are probably indulging rancor and resentment. While you indulge such hellish dispositions, what is your professed religion worth? Unless you forgive, you will never be forgiven. But if you feel not these passions, let not the unkind conduct of a fellow-sinner keep you from that ordinance which reminds you of him who died for all your sins. Go there, and think that ten thousand talents are forgiven you, and forgive and forget an erring brother's debt of a hundred pence.

Obj. 5. I love the Savior, and wish to follow him; but I fear coming to his table, lest I should eat and drink unworthily, and thus eat and drink damnation to myself. This leads me to neglect his command.

Ans. It is probable that your fears are founded on mistake. To eat and drink unworthily, and to partake of this ordinance with a deep sense of entire unworthiness, are two things as distinct as possible. The sin of eating and drinking unworthily, is committed when persons commune at the Lord's table in a careless, irreverent manner. So did the Corinthians, when some were hungry and others were drunken.

But probably the idea you attach to the expression, eating and drinking unworthily, is of quite a different description, and consequently you have quite mistaken its meaning. They who were once the chief of sinners, but who have fled to Jesus for salvation, unworthy as they feel themselves, do not eat and drink unworthily, when commemorating his death, who is their hope. But the proud moralist, the good-hearted young man, or innocent young woman, as the world esteems them, who never knew their sinfulness, and whose religion is no more than a little morality and

an outward form, when they come to this sacred table, do eat and drink unworthily.

Perhaps you have misunderstood the meaning of the expression, eating and drinking damnation. It is evident from the connection that the word does not here signify future punishment, but temporal judgments; for the apostle adds, "For this cause (viz. eating and drinking unworthily) many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." Sickness and death were the judgment that the members of the Corinthian church incurred by their irreverent behavior at the Lord's table. But so different was the judgment they endured from damnation, that it was sent to preserve them from that dreadful doom; for the apostle adds, "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

§ 6. This sacred ordinance should be treated with a peculiar degree of reverence. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." The feelings we should cherish at the Savior's table are those of deep self-abasement, sincere gratitude, fervent love, and increasing devotedness to the Son of God. Go not to that sacred ordinance in a light, irreverent way. Go not without self-examination, as to the state of your soul, and your progress in the divine life. Go not there to perform a duty, but to enjoy a privilege. And O, go there with a mind discerning the Lord's body. Tremble at the thought of partaking with a light irreverent mind of the memorials of the Savior's love. Place yourself as before his cross, and in the view of an expiring Redeemer devote

yourself anew to him, and let one subject of self-examination, before partaking at the table, be, how far the resolutions formed at the preceding opportunity have been regarded by you. Pursue this course, depending on the Spirit's aid, and though you should feel yourself the unworthiest of the unworthy, yet you will not eat and drink unworthily.

Often improve this sacred privilege. It appears that the primitive Christians very frequently, even weekly, and perhaps oftener, partook of the Lord's supper. If partaken of with proper views, it will nourish every grace, strengthen every virtue, and promote your growing meetness for that world of felicity, where, though this ordinance will cease, yet the event it commemorates will be celebrated in the triumphal anthems of the redeemed for ever and for ever.

§ 7. There are many lamentable instances in which communicants at the table of the Lord manifest a *declension* in religion by a disposition to neglect that sacred ordinance, and at the same time delude themselves with the notion that they are not going to give up religion altogether. Some extracts from a letter drawn up with the design of sending it to a young female who was falling into this deplorable condition, may perhaps without impropriety conclude these brief observations on the supper of the Lord. This young woman, while expressing her wish to neglect the Lord's table, professed that she should continue her attendance at public worship.

"A sincere desire to promote your spiritual welfare leads me to trouble you with these lines. Be assured they are written with an earnest wish for your everlasting welfare. Read them seriously, and weigh their

purport as carefully as you would do on a dying bed; and as you love your own soul, consider well what you are doing before you decide on what I fear will prove one of the most fatal actions of your life. Let me be plain with you. That plainness proceeds from love to your soul. Consider then, my friend, what you are doing, and whom you are pleasing by doing so; think what will be the probable consequences of the step you wish to take, and how you will view it at another day; and remember that the reasons of your conduct, whatever they are, must be examined by the Judge of all.

"Consider what you are doing. You wish to leave the church of Christ. Can you leave it without plunging into sin? and when separated from it, can you help leading a life of sin? You cannot, for you will live a life of disobedience to the Redeemer. If you were to live uttering an oath with every sentence, you would think this a wicked life, and it would be so. Its wickedness would arise from its disobedience to him who said, 'Swear not at all.' But you know that it is as much his will that his disciples should be united in church fellowship, as it is that they should avoid profane language; and it is as great a sin to break Christ's commands in one thing as in another. Did he ever give a more plain or positive command than, 'This do in remembrance of me?' It was his dying precept, and gratitude and love, if duty were out of the question, should lead you to obey his command. But in the life you wish to lead you would neglect this precept, and thus live a life of rebellion against the Lord Jesus Christ, whose last command you would habitually violate. Such conduct in any case is a dreadful sin; but in you

the sin will be aggravated by the profession you have made. Have not you solemnly confessed the Savior? Have not you, in private and in public, declared that you devoted yourself to the Lord? and would you fly from these solemn engagements? Have you vowed to the Lord, and would you go back? O, were you to live henceforth free from all other sin, yet this one of refusing and neglecting this sacred ordinance would bring a dreadful load of guilt upon your soul. Surely you could not say to your Redeemer, 'Lord, thou hast commanded me to remember thy dying love in thy own ordinance; but I will forget it, and slight thy appointment. Thou hast taught me that I should be united with thy flock; but I will forsake it, and cherish no such union.' You could not, I know you could not say this in words; but depend upon it the eternal Judge reads this as the language of your present wishes. In his sight, as well as in ours, actions speak louder than words.

"Think whom you are pleasing by your present conduct. Not your God. In his sight obedience is better than sacrifice. Not your Redeemer; for he says, 'If a man love me he will keep my words.' But be sure, as the wolf is delighted when he sees the sheep straying from the fold and exposing itself to his assaults, so are those infernal spirits pleased with your conduct who watch for your halting and wait for your destruction.

"Consider, also, what will be the probable consequences of the step you are taking. I cannot but fear that it will lead to entire backsliding. A deceitful heart and a deluding enemy may persuade you that there is no danger of this kind. You may think, 'I

will keep on attending at the house of God;' but when you are persuaded to neglect one part of duty, you will soon be persuaded to neglect another. I fear the step you are taking will prove in the issue a principal step in your way from your Redeemer to destruction. While leading a life of disobedience to his institutions, if he should vouchsafe you any of his blessing, you have no reason to expect it in such a measure as if you faithfully followed him, and therefore will probably soon forsake him altogether. You will also be deprived of the watchful care of every religious friend. If you fall now, there are those who are willing to raise you up; if you stray, who are anxious to bring you back; but when separated from the flock of Christ, every advantage of this kind will be lost to you. You will be numbered again with the unconverted world, and most probably will walk in the way of the multitude. And should your conduct, as it most probably will, end in total backsliding, surely you know who has said, The latter end of such is worse than their beginning.

"Think, also, how you will view your conduct at another day. If you disregard this faithful warning, if by degrees you fall from the truth, O what bitterness and anguish will seize upon you when, at death, you review your conduct! Then, when your spirit is just quitting its mortal tabernacle, when your flesh and heart fail, how will you mourn the fatal hour when you began to slight the Redeemer's will! how wish that you had been faithful to your Lord, whoever may be unfaithful! Even if your present conduct should not lead to these sad consequences; if its issue should not be total declension; if you should keep up some of the form, and even feel some of the power of religion;

yet would it not fill your last moments with doubts and fears to remember that you had led a life of willful and obstinate disobedience to one important part of the blessed Redeemer's will? Will not those excuses which now satisfy your mind, then appear but vanity and folly? And after all, what are those reasons, those excuses? Are they such as will stand the test of the judgment bar of Jesus Christ? Alas, does not conscience tell you that the true reason of all is, that you are not so much alive to God as you once were, that you are less concerned about eternal blessings, and, at least in heart, fallen from what you once enjoyed?"

The fears expressed in this letter appeared afterwards too well founded. The young woman by degrees dropped every thing like the form of religion; and a few years after her withdrawal it was stated to the writer that she had even parted with her Bible, as she declared it would no longer be of any use to her. Thus the way of the wicked seduceth them.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON DISPLAYING CHRISTIAN LOVE, ON GLORIFYING GOD BY DOING GOOD, AND ON LOVE TO ENEMIES.

§ 1. To a serious mind connection with the flock of Christ will appear the most honorable of earthly connections. In it a union is commenced which strengthen

ens when other unions dissolve, and which will be continued through eternity. However despised by many, however slighted by many more, a vital union with the flock of the Redeemer is a union with the family of God and the heirs of heaven. If you have entered into this sacred connection, having first given yourself to the Lord and then to his church, your own happiness, the honor of religion, and the comfort of those connected with you will much depend upon the manner in which you discharge the duties of so important a relation. There are many in the flock of the Savior who pursue a steady course of consistent piety from the day they enter the church below to that which removes them to the family above. Humble and kind, watchful and holy, beloved and loving, they move forward with a steady step to the home on which their best affections centre. Their light shines more and more unto the perfect day; nor then declines, but shines brightest at its setting; and when it sets, sets to rise brighter in eternity. Their pastors and their Christian friends never mourn on their account till they mourn their departure hence, and with such sorrow mingle gladness at the remembrance of what they were, and in the confidence of what they are. How different from those professors of religion whose inconsistencies excite many a fear that they are strangers to converting grace; whose harsh, or unkind, or conceited, or selfish ways are calculated to provoke disgust rather than win affection, and whose departure is darkened with a cloud of apprehensions that they are perhaps lost for ever. That you may be a happy and useful, and act as an honorable member of the church of Christ, pay peculiar attention to the nume-

rous precepts addressed immediately to his disciples, with which the New Testament abounds.

§ 2. Consider that Christianity is peculiarly a religion of LOVE. HOLY LOVE is its heart and soul. Love was its origin in the breast of the Eternal. Love directed its progress when the Son of God assumed our nature to atone for sin. Love governs its sincere votaries—the constraining love of Christ; and love will swell the triumphal songs of heaven. Cherish this godlike disposition, for love is of God.

§ 3. The following are some of the ways in which this heavenly disposition must be manifested to those who are traveling with you to heaven, and, wherever applicable, to those who are not so.

By rejoicing with them in their comforts, by sympathizing with them in their sorrows, and according to your utmost ability relieving them in their afflictions. "Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." "Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep." "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." "Comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak." "Whoso hath this world's good and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

In pursuing such labors of love, the Christian's time and strength are to be employed to administer to the comfort of others as well as to his own. The apostle Paul said, "So laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." So far should the Christian be from heaping up superflui-

ties for self-gratification, that he is to deny himself for the sake of promoting the benefit of others. "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens, that faileth not." To those who act this part, in the day of final account the Judge and King will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." To those who act not this part, whatever may have been their profession, or their knowledge, or their zeal, or their gifts, the King will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

Christian love to brethren in the Lord is to be shown, by bearing with their weaknesses, by subduing a selfish spirit, and seeking their welfare. Instead of being, as multitudes of professors are, only intent upon their own advantage, the real Christian is to cherish an interest in the welfare of all his fellow-pilgrims. "We

then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. For even Christ pleased not himself." "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's welfare."

Christian love is to be manifested by visiting the sick and afflicted. "Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." "I was sick, and ye visited me." This duty is by many much neglected, though the Savior lays so much stress upon its performance as even to mention it in the solemn account of those actions that will meet his approbation when he appears as the Judge of all. Those who are unable to feed the hungry, or clothe the naked, may yet visit and console the sick and afflicted. Would every disciple of Jesus make a point of regularly paying one such visit in a fortnight; of spending but one half hour in that time in consoling, or praying with, and instructing the afflicted, how much good would be done! and at how small an expense of time and exertion! A church of one hundred members would thus in a year pay two thousand six hundred such benevolent visits.

The same spirit is to be displayed by refraining from whatever might injure a weaker Christian's soul, even though the thing itself should be harmless. "When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

Christian love is to be shown by attending to those little offices of kindness which may promote the comfort of others. "Be pitiful, be courteous." Jesus said,

"Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." One of the humbler offices of kindness in Judea, where sandals were worn, appears to have been washing the feet. Of this kindness the blessed Savior set an instructive example, an example not designed to inculcate on all his followers that particular action, but that spirit of humility and kindness which, indulged, will lead to kind offices in a thousand varied ways.

Christian love is to be displayed by honoring and esteeming others above ourselves. "Be kindly affectioned to one another with holy love; in honor preferring one another." "In lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves."

Christian love is to be manifested by treating poorer brethren with as much kind attention as the rich. Read on this subject the Epistle of James, chap. 2 : 1–9.

Christian love is to be shown when discords arise, by attending to the directions which the Lord Jesus has given for their removal: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."

§ 4. For the promotion and restoration of harmony and peace there is not a more important rule than this in

the Bible, and few so little heeded. Were it regarded, probably the fire of strife would be speedily extinguished in ninety-nine cases of dissension out of every hundred. The prosperity of churches, the honor of religion, the peace of individuals, and the comfort of families, would all be advanced. But instead of obeying this plain and positive law, the generality of those who profess religion act as if there were no such law in the Bible. Some, instead of expostulating in the spirit of Christ with an offending friend, complain of the real or fancied injury, till the report, with a hundred exaggerations, spreads through half a town. At the same time they greedily drink in every evil report respecting the person who has injured them; to these again they give circulation, and thus become a hundred times more guilty than he whom they make an offender for a word, or even for a much more serious injury. Thus they injure the cause of religion, and load their own souls with sin. For, first, they are guilty of rebellion against Christ. He says about an offending brother, Go and tell him his fault between thee and him ALONE; instead of that, they tell any body or every body except the offender, and thus trample under foot the law of God. Were they to plunge into idolatry or drunkenness, they could but rebel against the Son of God, and they who make light of this solemn law of his are as truly rebels against him. The evil reports they greedily receive are most probably in a great degree false, and when they circulate these falsehoods they become guilty of scandal and lying. In connection with this they are guilty of indulging the worst and most hellish passions of the human heart, rancor, malice, and resentment: if they did not in-

dulge these hell-born passions, they would not lend a pleased and attentive ear to every idle tale against an offending friend; nor be pleased, if that person had been ever so wrong, to publish his shame: they see the mote in their brother's eye, but they have a beam in their own.

Others pursue a different course, but a course of rebellion as real, though not carried to the same extent, against the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Instead of taking the steps with an offending friend which he ordains, they sit down with sullen pride, and resolve to have no more to do with him. Instead of going and telling him his fault in private, and in the spirit of Christian affection, they at once treat him as "a heathen man and a publican." The rebellion in such cases against the authority of the Lord is as complete as in the former. Nothing can be more opposite than this law and their conduct.

This wicked conduct is often rendered still more wicked, from the flagrant fact that it is often indulged where there is no clear evidence that a brother has been an offender, and where perhaps there is nothing but vague report; yet instead of inquiring into the truth of this report, it is at once assumed to be correct, and that course of wickedness commences which has now been faintly delineated.

If you are one that thus trample under foot the authority of Christ, that pay no attention to his positive law on this subject, mock him no longer with the title of your Lord and Savior, while you are a real rebel against him; but go and join the ranks to which you belong; the ranks of his enemies, the swearers, the drunkards, the liars, the scoffers, the blasphemers:

they are but rebels, and while you neglect this precept, when a brother has offended you, you are as really a rebel as they, and perhaps a worse enemy; they are open enemies, not traitors in disguise. Rather let me say to you, if you have acted the part I have described, deplore your sin. Flee to the blood of sprinkling, and resolve that, in this respect, and every other, the laws of Christ shall govern you.

§ 5. Christian love is to be displayed by not rashly believing unfavorable reports against brethren and sisters in the Lord, and by forgiving those who may have committed faults, or even been the authors of repeated injuries. "Charity thinketh no evil; hopeth all things; endureth all things." "In malice be ye children." "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you." "Peter said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but until seventy times seven."

Christian love is to be displayed by hating tale-bearing, and by endeavors to promote harmony and peace. "Let all evil-speaking be put away from you." "Seek peace and pursue it." "Have peace one with another." "Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God."

Christian love is to be shown by a watchful concern to give our brethren no cause of offence, and, if we have dealt unkindly to any, by speedily seeking reconciliation. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another." "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath

aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

§ 6. Christian love is to be displayed by warning brethren of sin, and by *friendly reproof.* "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." "If thy brother trespass against thee, TELL him his fault." "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

To reprove sin in fellow-disciples, or in others, is an act of sincere friendship, and an important Christian duty; but in its discharge much prudence should be exercised. Sometimes there is a propriety in openly reproving the profane or indecent conversation of worldly persons. At other times this may be done more effectually by slipping a tract against the sin committed into the offender's hand, or by a friendly private remark. The errors or faults of an offending friend should seldom be publicly reproved. To converse affectionately with relatives or friends in private, is the far more probable way of promoting their welfare. Such reproof should ever be administered with kindness and affection, not with the authority of a superior, but with the humility of a fellow-sinner.

On excuses for neglecting this duty nothing more shall here be said than is contained in a short anecdote. One day a person being with a poor aged Christian, and lamenting a want of firmness to reprove the abandoned when traveling, had recourse, as an excuse, to that passage, "Give not that which is holy unto

dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine." She seriously and hastily replied, "O, Sir, keen and just reproofs are no pearls. Were you to talk to a blasphemer respecting the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, and the pleasures of communion with God, you might cast pearls before swine; but not in reproving sin."

§ 7. Christian love is to be manifested by endeavors to promote the spiritual welfare of our brethren in the Lord. "Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works: exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." "Comfort yourselves together, and edify one another."

Christian love and humility are to be displayed by receiving with meekness and thankfulness the admonitions and reproofs of those who wish us well. They are our best friends, whose faithfulness points out our faults and occasions their correction. They who are too proud to listen to reproof, manifest a dreadful want of the Christian spirit. "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness." "Whoso loveth instruction, loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish. The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."

Christian love is to be displayed by fervent prayers for the flock of the Lord, and for all mankind. "We pray always for you, that our God would fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power." "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men."

Finally, Christian love to brethren is to be shown by

avoiding divisions, and cherishing unity of spirit and affection. "Be of one mind; live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." "Mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them."

§ 8. Cherish the spirit inculcated in these precepts by the authority of the Lord Jesus. Thus act, and you will live esteemed and beloved; a comfort to others, and a comfort to yourself. Thus live, and you will enjoy the fairest evidence that you have passed from death unto life; and may indulge an animating hope that you shall soon join the church triumphant in that happier country, where all the truly pious "shall meet in Christ, and part no more."

While it is your incumbent duty thus to manifest Christian love to the household of faith, it is also your duty, in all those modes which are applicable to the situation and circumstances of those who are not the friends of the Savior, to manifest benevolence and love to them. Thus will you display to those who know it not, the influence of real piety. Though exhorted to do good, "especially to the household of faith," you are also exhorted to do good unto all.

§ 9. Besides those duties which devolve upon members of the Savior's flock, in reference to their brethren in the Lord, there are others which more immediately respect the *ministers* of the Gospel and the pastors of churches. The duties of those employed in the ministry of the Gospel are of the most important nature, and connected with the most awful responsibility. An idle, inactive, unfaithful minister, deserves neither respect or affection. But a minister of the Gospel who zealously endeavors, though with much im-

perfection, to discharge the duties of his station, is entitled to the deference, kindness and attention of the people to whom he ministers. Nothing can be more unchristian than the spirit which some professors of the Gospel manifest towards its ministers; a spirit of suspicion and distrust, as if they esteemed them tyrants, anxious to grasp power and sway; a spirit of opposition, which seems bent on thwarting the proceedings of those under whose ministry they sit.

On this subject, as well as others, the word of God is the surest guide. You are to esteem them highly. "We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." You are to treat their admonitions and advice with deference and respect; and so far to submit to them as is necessary to enable them comfortably to discharge the duties of overseers of the flock. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you." As far as they imitate Christ, it is your duty to imitate them. "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation; Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever."

Though the ministerial character is no shield where the conduct is inconsistent with it, yet you are not *lightly* to listen to reports to their disadvantage. "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses." The remarks on the

guilt and mischief of evil-speaking apply here with double force. In injuring the character of a minister of the Gospel, a peculiar injury is done to religion itself. Parents who profess to value religion, and who are in the habit of criticising and carping at ministers in the hearing of their children, take a ready way to train their children for perdition. Children thus taught by their parents to despise the ministers of the Gospel, will most probably go on in sin till they sink to hell; and may then ascribe their eternal damnation in a great degree to the unchristian conduct of their parents.

The members of a Christian church are bound by the express commandment of God to contribute according to their ability to the support of their pastor, and in doing this discharge a duty acceptable in the sight of God. "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we should reap your carnal things? So hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "Not because I desire a gift; but I desire fruit that may abound to your account."

The members of churches should pray for their pastor, and for each other. The importance of such prayer is strikingly displayed by the earnest desires expressed by the apostle Paul for the prayers of Christian brethren. If such an apostle, miraculously converted, endowed with the gift of tongues and miracles, who had been taken up into the third heaven, and to

whom the Lord had actually said, My grace is sufficient for thee; if such an apostle needed the prayers of his brethren, and ascribed much to their efficacy, how much more do ministers of the Gospel now! "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you." "Pray for us."

§ 10. These remarks rest upon the supposition that the minister you attend is worthy of your confidence and affection. If he be not a man of this description, why do you attend on his ministry? why connect yourself with the church to which he ministers? Your spiritual welfare may be so much promoted by the ministration of a pious and faithful pastor, that it should be in your esteem an object of the first magnitude to enjoy such ministrations, and to worship, not where your fancy may be pleased, but where your heart may be impressed with divine truth; where your growth in grace may be advanced; where the preacher in good earnest preaches as for eternity. A Christian should esteem such a pastor as one of the best friends; nor should foibles or imperfections alienate regard; for who on earth has no imperfections? Consider such a friend as the helper of your faith. Be not backward to unfold to him your trials and your conflicts. Treat him as a friend in whom you can confide; a friend who is anxious to promote your welfare, as an under-shepherd, who watches for your soul. Such conduct will tend to your pastor's comfort, and to the advancement of your best, your eternal interest.

§ 11. Many and important are the *motives* that should stimulate you to cherish brotherly love. There is much in the character and situation of your Christian friends to call this heavenly grace into exercise. They are dear to Christ; are the purchase of his blood; the objects of his care; his flock; his friends; his jewels. Thus dear to him, should they not be dear to you? They are your fellow-travelers to heaven, with whom you hope to spend eternal days. In heaven the family of Jesus will mutually love for ever, and should not love reign in their hearts through the few dark days of mortal life? The sorrows you now endure they feel; the foes with whom you wrestle they encounter; the desires that glow in your heart animate theirs; the hopes that cheer you encourage them. Now, too, the God you love they love; in the Savior whom you trust they confide; the blood that cleansed you has cleansed them; the Spirit that dwells in you dwells in them; and all that enriches you is their portion. You hope hereafter to inhabit the same heaven; to belong to the same family; and, beneath the unclouded lustre of the same eternal day, to ascribe blessing and honor to the same Redeemer. Thus united by renewing grace, united in privileges, in trials, in joys and in sorrows, in hopes and in prospects, in friends and in inheritance, united in bands that are to last for ever, should you not be united in heart and affection? Love and gratitude to your exalted Lord also call for love to your fellow-pilgrims. He commands his disciples to manifest such love, and in the earnestness of his heart prayed that it might be displayed by them. John, 13 : 34; 17 : 11–23. Will you not devoutly cherish that heavenly grace

which is the subject of commands so binding, and prayers so fervent and divine?

If you regard your Redeemer's honor you must cherish love. "By this," said he, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." So exemplary was the love of the early Christians to each other, that even their enemies bore testimony to its power, when they said, "See how these Christians love one another." This love recommended their divine religion so much that the apostate emperor Julian represented their love to each other as contributing not a little to spread Christianity.

If you regard the peace of your own mind you must cherish brotherly love. The word of God declares the possession of this to be one of the clearest evidences of conversion, and its absence to be as clear an evidence of a state of sin and death. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother abideth in death." In short, of such immense importance is this heavenly grace, that all the knowledge, gifts, and talents in the world are nothing without love.

§ 12. The religion of the Gospel demands from its votaries the active exertion of their different powers, in promoting the glory of God and the welfare of man. The Lord Jesus represents his disciples as servants, whose Master intrusts them with a portion of *his* property, which during his absence they are to improve. All have something intrusted to them to improve. While some have five talents, others have two; but they who have the least have one. Yet these talents are *not their own.* He delivered to them *his* goods. The Lord Jesus has intrusted at least one talent, per-

haps many, to your care. Your time, your Sabbaths, your means of grace, your property, your opportunities for usefulness in any way, your health, your strength, whatever you possess that can benefit man or glorify God, is a talent intrusted to you by the eternal Master. They all belong to him. They are but lent to you. O reckon all you have the Lord's. Important motive for faithfulness! Impressively important, when it is considered how rich a regard heavenly love will bestow where even one talent has been sedulously improved, and how the mere neglect of improving even one renders him to whom it was lent a wicked and slothful servant.

§ 13. Many are the modes by which Christians may promote the glory of their God and Savior, and the eternal interests of their fellow-mortals. Among these are the following:

Conversing seriously and prudently on vital religion with those who are destitute of its blessings. An old writer mentions the case of a pious man, who, by his zeal in conversing with his neighbors and acquaintance, in their shops or their fields, had been the instrument of converting thirty or forty persons.

Seconding the exertions of Christian ministers, by inducing friends or neighbors to hear the word of life; and by encouraging and directing such as appear subjects of serious impressions. Incalculable good has thus, under the divine blessing, been effected. It is recorded of a Baptist church in Yorkshire, that soon after its origin, each member, with this view, "made it a point of duty to endeavor to bring one careless sinner under the sound of the Gospel, and to use every scriptural method to engage him to embrace it. And when the object of his

cares had enrolled himself among the followers of Christ, he looked about for another wandering sheep, that he might endeavor to bring also into the fold of the church. Were such a spirit and such conduct general among the friends of Christ, what immense good would result from it."

Some years ago the writer visited a young man who left this world in peace and hope. He belonged to a family, of which most or all were strangers to religion, and he, till within a few years of his happy departure, had been so too. A Christian friend frequently invited him to the house of prayer. These invitations were often slighted, but he at length attended, and listened to the word of life; in short, he became a disciple of the Savior; and after a short course in the church below, was moved, there was full reason to believe, to the church triumphant. I know an instance in which a young woman sought, in the same way, to promote the everlasting benefit of a female acquaintance. Her efforts long seemed in vain. She who was the object of them promised to comply with her invitations, but still delayed. At length, when perhaps a year had rolled away without success, she went once more to invite her acquaintance, and was so affected by frequent disappointment, that she burst into tears. The other now yielded; she went to the house of prayer; she felt the power of divine truth, and became a monument of saving mercy. The writer could mention other instances—they are many, and were all the disciples of Jesus active, would doubtless be many more.

Another mode of usefulness open to all the disciples of the Savior, is that of kindly noticing and encouraging persons who become hearers of the Gospel. It is a

frequent case, that persons who have lived without God in the world, begin to frequent the house of prayer. They need instruction. They are perhaps impressed, and need encouragement; but they are acquainted with no Christian friend. If the congregation is numerous, the minister may know nothing of them. Hence they perhaps pine in despondency, or the little spark of holy desire dies for want of some one to fan it to a flame; but where the members of a church are active, and eager to seize opportunities for doing good, such persons will soon be noticed, directed, and encouraged.

The Christian who watches for opportunities of doing good, will find many: and some that seem insignificant may effect good beyond the most sanguine calculations. A considerable Baptist church exists in Leicestershire, which owed its origin, in a great degree, to a pious remark introduced in a letter on business. This impressed the mind of the thoughtless youth to whom it was addressed. He embraced religion, and opened his house for preaching. Many who had never heard the Gospel attended. A comfortable house of prayer was erected in this then dark village. Many who have worshipped in that house, there is reason to believe, now worship in the better house above, and others are pursuing the path that leads to eternal peace. What cannot God effect, by apparently feeble means, when Christian zeal directs the conduct of his children.

By lending or giving away religious books and Tracts incalculable good may be effected. These apparently feeble instruments have been the means of producing

most important benefits. A tract given away on the road, or dropped by the highway side, has awakened a profligate to reflection, and led a child of wrath to the Lamb of God for salvation. Few are there among the followers of the Savior who might not pursue many of these modes of usefulness.

Sabbath schools open a wide field for the labors of Christian philanthropy. And an immense field for usefulness is now offered by Bible, Missionary, and other benevolent associations. The active collectors in those institutions are a most important part of the grand moral machine by which God is diffusing the Gospel of his Son.

§ 14. The physician who would snatch a dying patient from the grave, must form a correct estimate of the malignity of his disease; nor would his benevolence be admired, if he pronounced the plague a harmless disorder. So in all your schemes for usefulness, bear in mind that the objects of your kindness are not beings slightly tainted with corruption, but wholly corrupt and depraved. Are you a parent? you will see many charms in your children. Yet remember they are as depraved as you feel yourself to be, and as others naturally are. A mere *moral* education may save them from grosser sins, but will never save them from eternal death. Teach them that they are sinners, and lead them to the fountain of salvation. Are you employed in teaching the children of others? or is it friends or neighbors whose salvation you are anxious to promote; still consider they are sinners. You have to warm a heart that is cold; to enlighten a mind that is dark. Within that heart there are principles of depravity opposed to all you wish to inculcate. Need you

be surprised at discouragement? You may say of every object of your care, Here is an immortal creature, passing a few moments on the stage of time, and thence going to heaven or hell; already lost; a stranger to God, to the Savior, to happiness; blind in mind; corrupt in affections. This view should regulate your exertions, and should lead you to God for his Spirit to bless them; but should not discourage, since similar exertions have been the means of leading many to eternal life.

§ 15. All the obligations you lie under to the God of love, should stimulate your zeal to promote his glory in the salvation of your fallen fellow-creatures. Snatched yourself from the burning pit, should you not strive to snatch others from the flame? Redeeming love has displayed to us a salvation precious as the blood poured out by Jesus upon Calvary—costly as the wealth of heaven which he resigned—free as the air we breathe, and lasting as the eternity of God. Redeeming love has blessed us for both worlds—given us wealth for poverty—comfort for misery—hope for despair—forgiveness instead of condemnation—the love of God instead of eternal separation from him—and heaven instead of hell. But the giver of these mercies bids us communicate the tidings of them to others. "Let him that heareth say, Come." Can we be truly influenced by the love displayed in that Gospel, if we do not labor and strive to benefit those who are perishing around us?

§ 16. Can pity move? pity must move you here. You live in a ruined world—described by God as a world dead in trespasses and sins, even ALL DEAD. Could you spend an hour in a prison filled with malefactors doomed to die? would not the mournful spectacle melt your

heart into compassion, and your eyes into tears? A more mournful spectacle surrounds you—a dead world. Millions of rational and immortal beings, all lost, all dead; all hastening to the grave with a sure and steady step, and unless taught of God, all hastening to the death that never dies; all dead, all doomed to die, and all, as sinners, doomed to hell. It is true, heavenly mercy discloses a path to life from these regions of spiritual death; but, ah! how few regard those saving dictates! Excepting only that happy few of the high and low, the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, and the bridegroom and the bride, and the ancient and the young, are dead to God, and dead to sin. Can you be a Christian yourself, if you strive not to snatch some of the firebrands from the flame? Can you look at a parent or a child, a brother or a sister, a husband or a wife, and think this beloved relative is sinking to eternal death, and not feel anxious to lead them to the Savior's fold?

§ 17. If *love* can constrain you to exertion, you must be active. Can you, if truly a Christian, contemplate the costly sacrifice and nameless agonies of the Son of God, and yet remain indifferent to the prosperity of the cause for which he died? Can you behold the Father of eternity resigning the Son of his love, in compassion to you and to man, and yet be careless about the conversion of a perishing brother? Did the Son of God sacrifice so much for your eternal happiness, and should you not anxiously render to him all the services that you can crowd into a few fleeting, mortal days? Do you believe that the Son of God abode in

this vale of pollution, this world of death, for more than thirty mournful years? Do you believe that here he encountered every human wo, and all this for you? Do you believe this, if you feel little concerned about the prosperity of the cause for which he lived and died? The tongue may say "Yes," but a cold heart and inactive life more truly answer "No," you believe it not, you have but the shadow of belief. Do you believe that through sin death and perdition were your righteous doom, but that a divine hand has snatched you from the fire—has woven for you a garland of unfading glory—has prepared for you an everlasting rest beyond the scenes of toilsome life? Can you believe this and remain inactive? God forbid that you should ever act so base a part; though, alas! it is acted by multitudes!

§ 18. In the *value of the deathless soul* you should find another motive for activity. The poor, vain, giddy, trifling crowd around you are to live for ever. You know their danger, they know it not; you feel the worth of a soul, they feel it not.

Ah, my friend, even you know not the worth of an immortal soul! It doth not yet appear what we shall be. Could a ransomed soul appear to us, arrayed in the glories of eternity and the charms of heaven, we might suppose the happy spirit a high archangel. No, it is no archangel; it is the soul; the soul which once inhabited a poor afflicted body, and appeared a worm, and no man; the soul which Satan ruled, but which a mightier power snatched from his hand; the soul over which angels rejoiced; the soul for which Jesus died; and, O, more strange! the soul which some humble Christian's pious cares led to the Savior and to heaven.

If you should be thus successful in but one instance, this one would be a rich reward even for the labors of the longest life. "He which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." How tragical a sight is the execution of a criminal! how much more tragical the perdition of a soul! How great a benefactor would he be esteemed who might deliver a sinking nation from famine, pestilence, slavery, and the sword! but they are instruments of effecting much greater good who lead only one soul to the Savior of mankind. It is in the labors of Christian piety that great events crowd upon each other; events, perhaps judged little by the world, yet great, because their influence is extensive as eternity. A Christian is accosted by a poor beggar—poor for time, and poorer for eternity. He gives the suppliant a trifle, and adds a Tract: the beggar goes, he reads, he feels, his heart is impressed—he feels his state, he flees to the Savior for salvation. The event is unknown to all the world; the subject of it lives in poverty, and dies like Lazarus. The same day on which this Tract is given a mighty battle is fought; hundreds of thousands engage in the conflict—the fate of nations is decided by its issue. The fame of the victors fills the world, and will be handed down to the last age of time. Which is the great event? the battle? Ah, no! not unless it has more influence on eternity than the other. The great event is the poor beggar's conversion. That will be remembered when the trumpet of fame is hushed by the archangel's oath that time shall be no longer. That will be a subject of gratitude and joy, of delight and praise, when the triumphs of contending nations are forgotten, and when those na-

tions themselves are swept into oblivion by the besom of destruction.

§ 19. In addition to all the other powerful motives which should stimulate the Christian to activity, there is one which the Son of God assigned as a reason for his unwearied exertions: "The night cometh, in which no man can work," the night of death, that will put an eternal end to all our labors for the glory of God in the salvation of man. The longest summer's day soon elapses, and he who toils from its dawn to its close soon has to say, My labor is done. So time will soon end with those you wish to benefit, and end with you. The parent must shortly cease to instruct his child, and the child to pray for his parent. The Sabbath school teacher must finish his last lesson, and the minister his last sermon, and every follower of Jesus end his last conflict, offer his last prayer, and finish his last attempt to lead poor wandering men to heaven. The night cometh when no man can work. Endeavor, then, to crowd into the little span of life all the benevolent actions, all the useful services possible. Have you an opportunity for relieving the afflicted, for instructing the ignorant, for comforting the mourner? Say not, I will improve the next opportunity. You cannot improve the next for this; the next will be a fresh one, that will require its own improvement. To do good twice is better than to do so once. Be active; be zealous; for the time is short. Think how short is the day of labor; how long, how near, the eternity of rest! Behold the blood-bought crown which glitters through the skies. Hear the voice which says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the fir-

mament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." And O, what is the for ever of heaven! Look to him who became for man's welfare a man of sorrows and of toil. Think of admission to his presence, and there of meeting some snatched by your instrumentality from everlasting night, and there of joining with them in the new eternal song of glory to the Lamb.

Think of all this, and can you be the cold, formal, negligent, worthless creature that some professors of the Gospel are?

TREATMENT OF ENEMIES.

§ 20. Few are so happy as to pass through this world without encountering hostility and enmity. Even the blessed Jesus had enemies; and all the gentle graces of his character, all the harmlessness of his benevolent life, all the good effected by his unwearied labors, did not prevent his being the object of scorn and malignity, hatred and persecution. Perhaps by enemies your character may be defamed, and injury and loss heaped upon you. Should this ever be the case, then remember the instructions of the Bible. The natural feelings of your heart may prompt you to indulge resentment; to revile those who revile you, to take pleasure in their distresses who take pleasure in yours, or in hearing them defamed who have defamed you. But these feelings are as opposite to those the Christian must cherish as hell is to heaven. You are solemnly commanded to do no ill to those who may do ill to you. "Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work" "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Avenge not yourselves, but ra-

ther give place unto wrath." You are not only forbidden to injure enemies, but forbidden to take pleasure in their afflictions. "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, lest the Lord see it, and it displease him.

Inculcating upon you a disposition like his own, the God of mercy solemnly and imperiously requires from you the forgiveness of injuries and of enemies. The Savior teaches you, when praying for forgiveness, to declare to God that you forgive. "Forgive us our sins, FOR we also forgive EVERY ONE that is indebted to us." He adds, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." The divine Savior calls on his disciples not merely to forgive an injurer or an enemy, but to requite injuries by benefits, evil by good. "I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

§ 21. Exemplifying his divine instruction, the holy Jesus, while his enemies were nailing him to the cross, prayed for mercy on those murderers: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." His first martyr expired with a similar prayer upon his lips. The duties here inculcated are at times among the most difficult possible; yet they must be practiced

if you would enjoy the Savior's favor. The proud heart must be made to bend, the resentful heart must be brought to forgive, or your religion will prove an empty name. You may say, I have been so injured that I cannot forgive; but if you cannot you will never be forgiven. Besides, it is absurd and wicked, if you are a disciple of Jesus, to say, I cannot discharge this duty, I cannot comply with this precept. What mere nature cannot do, grace can effect, and will effect, in the case of every heir of heaven. "My grace," said Jesus, "is sufficient for thee." "I can do all things," his servant added, "through Christ, that strengtheneth me;" and that grace is still sufficient. If you indulge an unforgiving spirit, be candid, be honest, deceive not yourself, you cannot deceive your Judge. Say not, I cannot forgive, but say, I will not; for be assured, while the grace of Christ is sufficient for all who seek his aid, if you have enemies whom you do not forgive, the reason is not that you cannot, but that you will not. Yet remember, unless you do so mortify corruption as to forgive every enemy, the decree is gone forth that will shut you out of heaven. Eternal truth has said, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Cherish humility, and then it will not be a difficult duty to forgive and bless even the bitterest foes. It is pride that renders man so prone to resentment, so unwilling to forgive. Think what have been your crimes against the majesty of heaven! How vast his goodness! how dire your ingratitude! how many your offences! yet how rich, how free his forgiving love! Had all the inhabitants of the earth been persecuting you with ceaseless cruelty and hatred; had every moment

witnessed fresh injuries inflicted by them, and fresh miseries suffered by you; if considered merely in reference to you, the guilt of all the ceaseless, causeless enmity of all those millions, would not have been so great as the guilt of your least sin against your gracious but much injured God. And does he forgive ten thousand talents? Has he for you blotted out sins vast as the mountains of the earth, and countless as the stars of heaven? Can you believe this, and indulge resentment against a poor fellow-worm that has injured you? Can you think, "I was a traitor doomed to fire, yet my injured Creator has snatched me from the flame by the costly sacrifice of his dear Son;" can you believe this, and cherish resentment against a poor brother mortal, whose utmost offences against you bear no more proportion to those your God has forgiven, than a spark to the noon-day sun, or an atom of dust to the vast world?

§ 22. Is the person who has injured you a Christian brother? Do you believe, that, notwithstanding the conduct you condemn, he is indeed an heir of heaven? Surely then you should cheerfully forgive. Do you believe that God forgives him? that the blood of Jesus has washed away his stains? Do you hope to meet him as a friend, where no dissensions arise; where an eternal day will be one day of harmony and love? Are these your hopes? Ah, what is there by the way that should render those at discord here, who hope to be friends to all eternity? Or view the subject of dispute as you will, view it from the edge of the grave, or from eternity: "I never," says one of the best of uninspired writers, "heard of any that stole his winding sheet, or fought for his coffin, or went to law for his grave." And when you are thus near eternity, and

going to wear that last suit, a shroud—in that last earthly abode, a grave—how insignificant will those things appear, that now, perhaps, divide your affections from those you should love as fellow-travelers to the world of peace!

But, perhaps, some have wronged you greatly, who are utter strangers to the grace of God. Surely you should rather view them with pity than with anger. O think of their deplorable state! They have souls immortal as your own; but these are perishing in sin. The blood of Jesus has washed none of their stains away. No hope for eternity is theirs. Your hope blooms with immortality; but darkness and despair are their probable future portion. They are the enemies of God; and all before them, in the endless world, is weeping, and lamentation, and wo. How pitiable a condition! Should you not rather pray for them than indulge resentment against poor fellow-creatures in so miserable a state? surely they have long enough to mourn. If they will seek nothing higher, let them enjoy their short-lived triumph. It is all they ever can enjoy. Repine not at their prosperity, when it is all confined to a few moments, and they have to mourn and weep for ever.

CHAPTER XVII.

ON THE SPIRITUAL CONFLICTS AND SORROWS OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST.

§ 1. The Christian's path to heaven is a chequered path. Many are the sacred pleasures of the followers of the Lamb; but they have also pains and trials peculiar to themselves.

'Much in sorrow, much in wo,
"Onward, Christians, onward go;
"Fight the fight, and, worn with strife,
"Steep with tears the bread of life.
"Onward, Christians, onward go!
"Join the war, and face the foe."

Every disciple of Jesus will find that the Christian life is truly a warfare. Would you behold those who have no foes without, no foe within; whom no fears distract, no dangers threaten: it must be when you join them in the upper world; and if you ever join them there, assisted from above, you must persevere in the warfare which they have triumphantly ended.

"Life is the scene of conflict, not of rest;
"Man's is laborious happiness at best;
"On this side death his dangers never cease,
"His joys are joys of conquest, not of peace."

§ 2. The spiritual sorrows and conflicts which the Christian has to endure are of various kinds. Many

of his trials proceed from within. He feels the correctness of the statement made in the word of truth: "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye do not the things which ye would." By the expression, the flesh, in the Scriptures, appears frequently to be meant human corruption, or those remains of depravity with which the believer has to struggle. This is one of the Christian's principal enemies. The world occasionally allures by its charms, or alarms by its terrors. The assaults of Satan take place at times, though not constantly continued; but the flesh is like a body of death, with which the Christian is perpetually burdened. The Scriptures represent the conquest and destruction of this constant enemy as a painful and difficult achievement. It is not described as dying by a sudden wound, but by a slow and lingering death. "They that are Christ's have *crucified* the flesh with its affections and lusts." The young Christian commencing his course, full of joy and hope, may for a while be comparatively insensible to the presence of this constant enemy; but soon he will find that he has to struggle with an evil heart, and has need to crucify the flesh with its affections and desires.

§ 3. In every nation, in every age, this has been the experience of the followers of the Lamb. The eminent martyr, Bradford, on one occasion observed, "O Lord! sometimes methinks I feel it so with me as if there were no difference between my heart and the wicked. I have as blind a mind as they; as stout stubborn, rebellious, and hard a heart as they." Henry Martyn, so distinguished for piety, wrote in his jour-

nal, "What a dark atheistical state do I live in! Alas, that this creation should so engross my mind, and the Author of it be so slightly and coldly regarded! Amazing patience! he bears with this faithless, foolish heart!" Yet he who uttered these complaints, when breathing forth the pious feelings of his soul, could say, "Let me praise God for having turned me from a life of wo to the enjoyment of peace and hope. The work is real. I can no more doubt it than I can doubt my existence; the whole current of my desires is altered—I am walking quite another way, though I am incessantly stumbling in that way—I had a most blessed view of God and divine things. I looked forward to complete conformity to him, as the great end of my existence, and my assurance was full—I said, almost with tears, 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' This is my bliss, that Christ is all. Upheld by him, I can smile at death. O what have I to do but labor, and pray, and fast, and watch for the salvation of my soul, and those of the heathen world?"

Similar to the experience of these and other bright ornaments of the Christian church, has been that of the least distinguished disciples of the Savior. The illiterate and uncivilized heathen, when truly brought to embrace the Gospel, has felt similar sorrows, and uttered similar complaints. A missionary, referring to negro converts, wrote, "I was much delighted to hear about twenty of them give a simple but affecting account of the state of their minds. They seem to labor under trials from without and from within—from their own country-people, and from the temptations of Satan and the struggles of a depraved heart. They speak

strongly as to their good and their bad hearts, the one opposing the other, so that they cannot do the things they would. One said, "Trouble too much live in my heart. Me be poor sinner. Me no see, me no feel, till God open my heart. Now my heart trouble me too much. Me think me have two hearts; one good, one bad. Good heart tell me pray—bad heart tell me no pray. I try pray God—my bad heart trouble me; he speak: he say, 'No pray: go work.'

"Another complained, 'My heart too wicked. Me can't love Jesus Christ. Me want to love him, but my wicked heart won't let me. When I pray, my heart tell me, What you pray for? Jesus Christ no hear your prayer! You too bad! May Jesus Christ give me a better heart! for my heart bad past all hearts!'"

Such is recorded as the simple and expressive language of these illiterate disciples of the Savior.

§ 4. Perhaps the feelings of your heart have often resembled theirs. Have you not been cast down, and perhaps tempted to despair, because of the corruption which you felt within? What has been the cause of your sorrow?

Perhaps you mourn an evil heart of unbelief. The graces that exist in your soul are so opposed and weakened by powerful corruptions, that they seem like light struggling with darkness. In some happy moments you think you *do* trust and *will* trust the Savior with your all; but these moments too soon depart, and you feel as if you had no trust in him. Sometimes you are ready to conclude that you do indeed believe on the Savior of the lost; but soon you feel faith so weak, hope so dull, love so cold, that you doubt whether you possess any faith, or hope, or love. You are ready to

exclaim, Can it be that such a cold dull creature as I am believes in the Lord Jesus Christ? Can this be the faith to which so much is promised? Do I indeed believe that Jesus died for me, and yet love him no more? Do I indeed believe that sin is so mischievous, and hate it so little? Do I believe that heaven is so desirable? why then these cold affections, these languid desires? And do I believe that God will order all things for good? whence then my fears? whence my rebellious will? Surely I cannot be a believer: If I am, the Lord help my unbelief!

You must not infer that you have no faith because faith is weak, or because you feel within you an evil heart of unbelief. What servant of God, whose piety his word records, did not at some times feel the same? Jacob said, "All these things are against me." Job wished he had never been born. Asaph repined at the prosperity of the ungodly, and was tempted to think a pious life vain. David expressed fear that God had cast him off for ever. Peter, when ordered by his Lord to walk upon the water, through want of faith began to sink. "O thou of little faith," said his Lord, "wherefore didst thou doubt?" Often had the Savior to reprove the apostles for their unbelief. They had to pray, "Lord, increase our faith;" and he represented what they had as hardly equal to a grain of mustard seed. If such was the weakness of this grace even in the hearts of apostles when their Lord was with them, be not cast down in despondency, though you have to complain. It is unspeakably desirable for faith to strengthen into full assurance; yet there may be a precious and saving faith in a heart that feels many of the struggles of unbelief, and that clings to the Savior with

trembling. If you have so much faith as leads you to give up earth for heaven, this is genuine; for "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." If you have such faith as renders Christ precious to you; as leads you to love his friends, to walk in his ways, and to count all things loss for him; this in his word, in plain and unequivocal language, is declared to be saving. "To you that believe he is precious." If Christ is precious to you, it is plain you believe. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."

Nor must you suppose that the Savior is unwilling to help you, because you feel the painful struggles occasioned by an evil heart of unbelief. When the poor supplicant, begging relief for his child, exclaimed, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief;" did Jesus refuse his aid, and say, Subdue that unbelief; then come to me, and I will help you? Far was such conduct from his compassionate heart. Instead of this, he answered the supplicant's prayer, and strengthened his faith by giving him his request. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Wait then at his footstool till he bless. A time will come when unbelief shall die; nor shall one of its struggles be felt in the happy soul through eternal ages.

§ 5. Perhaps your soul sinks within you on the review of former years. Conscience accuses you of thou-

sands of crimes, and brings to remembrance mercies abused, Sabbaths broken, sins committed without concern, iniquity drank in like water, and many long rebellious years employed in rebellion against God. Now you think, Can all these crimes be forgiven? Can one who was so long and so zealously employed in the service of hell, ever reach heaven? Can one so sinful, so impure as I have been, ever find admission to that holy world where nothing that defileth can enter?

Perhaps your discouragement springs not so much from what you were, as from what you are. You feel that every grace you have is weak; that many imperfections and defects adhere to you; you find in yourself much backwardness to good, much proneness to evil; you lament wandering affections and sinful inclinations. You are ready to exclaim, I am like no one else; no heart is so hard as mine. I can neither repent, nor believe, nor love, nor obey as I ought. I am nothing but unworthiness.

Do some or all these things sink you in depression? Then consider for what did Jesus come. Was it not to save *the lost?* Can you be more lost than utterly lost? yet such are those he came to seek and save, and such were many that have felt his saving power. See in David a murderer pardoned; in Paul a persecutor and blasphemer forgiven and saved. See from the Corinthian church many admitted to heaven that once were extortioners, and drunkards, and fornicators, and adulterers, and idolaters, and even guilty of nameless abominations. But when the Spirit brought them to repentance, the blood of Jesus blotted out all their atrocious crimes, and it could be said to them, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified by the name

of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." You are not to seek comfort from the hope that your crimes have been small; but from reposing your hope on Him whose blood cleanses from all sin. Did the servant who sought mercy when he owed ten thousand talents, meet a refusal because the debt was so great? Did the creditor forgive the debtor who owed fifty pence, but refuse to forgive him who owed five hundred? Did he not forgive one as well as the other? and he that had most forgiven loved the most.

"But am I so unworthy?" It is true you are, and the better you know yourself, the deeper will be this impression. Not one of your actions ever was holy enough to stand the investigation of God's pure and searching eye. What worthiness can be expected in a criminal condemned deservedly to die? How much less can worthiness be expected in a sinner, the wages of whose sin is death, eternal death!—Worthiness of good in such a case is impossible. They that are worthy of hell can be worthy of nothing besides. This you, and all, have deserved; but the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. If accepted by God, you will be accepted in him, the Beloved. If eternal life is your portion, you must receive it and enjoy it as the gift of God.

Allow me to inquire, Does not discouragement on these grounds savor of a legal spirit? Is not there still in your heart a leaning to a righteousness of your own? If you look for forgiveness as an act of grace, and salvation as a blessing given to a poor condemned, hell-deserving sinner, why these fears? They seem to flow from a self-righteous bias, which would encourage you to hope at least a little from some worthiness

possessed, or some freedom from grosser crimes; and because you do not feel that worthiness and remember those crimes, therefore this ground of your hope is shaken. Look to Jesus as altogether ruined in yourself, and expecting your all in him, and then you need not fear.

§ 6. Perhaps with these painful feelings you connect the apprehension that your repentance was not sufficiently deep. You remember the number of your sins, and the fewness of your tears; the evil of your iniquities, and the weakness of your sorrows when bewailing those transgressions. Or you think what pangs of penitential grief some have experienced, but you have not felt the same; or what joys and peace they have found, far surpassing all that you ever experienced. Hence you are disposed to conclude, Surely I am not a Christian.

Draw not this conclusion hastily. Some whose convictions and penitence have appeared very deep and strong, have soon returned to their wallowing in iniquity; while others, whose impressions were gentle as the descent of evening dew, by lives of humble piety have afterwards proved that their repentance was real, and the change in their hearts the effect of a divine hand. God sometimes displays his power in tempests and tornadoes, but oftener in the gentle breakings of the day. God does not work in all alike. John, and James, and Peter, and Matthew hearkened to a gentle call, and followed Christ. No terrors alarmed them; and probably the change effected by divine grace in their hearts, was as gentle as the opening of a summer's morning. But Paul, overwhelmed with terrors,

was struck speechless to the earth; and the jailer felt probably as great a commotion in his breast as the earthquake which shook the foundations of the prison. Repentance must be known, not by the strength of its pangs, but by the fruits it produces. The most tormenting pangs of sorrow are not true repentance, if they do not inspire the soul with hatred of sin, and urge it to Jesus for peace and salvation. If your repentance has been so deep as to fill you with hatred of sin; as to lead you to forsake, and watch, and pray against sin in all its forms; and as to urge you to flee to the Lord Jesus, and to accept him as your Savior, your Lord, and your all, it is genuine, it is saving. Do not therefore imagine that others have no grace, whose experience has not been a copy of yours; nor suppose that you have none, because yours does not exactly resemble theirs. If you trust in the same blood, if you love the same Savior, if you walk in the same path, serve the same God, and seek the same heaven, depend upon it you have felt the influence of the same Spirit; and though the operation has differed, the effect is the same. If you saw a valley, like that seen in the vision by Ezekiel, covered with the dead, but among the lifeless multitudes a few possessed of life and vigor; part of which had been raised suddenly from death, and the other part so gradually, that none could tell when the vital spark was infused; would it be argued that these were not alive, because they had risen so imperceptibly into life? or would it be reasonable for any of these to doubt their possession of the life they felt, because they could not trace its first motions on their frame? You live in a dead world; and if you feel a spiritual life begun, be

thankful and rejoice in God, though you should be unable to tell the time when he breathed into you the breath of life. To know that you live is unspeakably momentous; but to know when that life began, is of much less importance.

§ 7. Perhaps you lament, that while you wish to be different, you feel so little improvement. You try to pray with all the earnestness you can; yet still find a cold heart and dead affections. You wish for freedom from worldly thoughts when praying; yet still they haunt your soul and distract your mind. You gain no sensible answer from God, no comfortable sense of his love shed abroad in your heart; but day rolls on after day, and week after week, and you are still cold, unhappy, and depressed. Perhaps you can say, I have sought the Savior, and if I perish, will perish at his feet; yet no comfort comes into my soul. I seek the rest he promises, but feel none of the delight and tranquillity that I have prayed and expected to find.

Perhaps, in mercy, God for a time withholds the blessings, or the sensible enjoyment of the blessings you solicit; yet persevere, and you will obtain them. The woman of Canaan, that pleaded for her daughter, seemed to meet a refusal from even the compassionate Jesus. Again she asked, again he seemed to deny; but it was to exercise her faith, and let its strength and power appear. God long waited, while you refused to listen; why should you be surprised if he now expect you to persevere in imploring blessings before he lets you feel that you possess them?

Consider, too, that they who have true desires for grace, have so much grace as to be blessed. The Lord says, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst

after righteousness, for they shall be filled." They who hunger and thirst after any good, feel their want, and experience earnest and painful desire; a desire that never can be satisfied but with the wished-for blessing. Give to him that is tormented with hunger or thirst, a heap of gold or jewels; this would not relieve his wants. If your desires after spiritual good are those earnest restless desires that the possession of a world would not satisfy, but that an interest in the Savior would, amidst all your conflicts, doubts and fears, you still are blessed; for, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness."

§ 8. Perhaps you mourn the loss of comforts which you once enjoyed. There was a time when you were cheered with the presence of God. Your soul rejoiced in his love. Your heart glowed with love to him. Your hopes were bright. You anticipated immortality with pleasure. You looked to the Savior with grateful delight, and could say, He loved me, and gave himself for me. But now your joy is changed for mourning; your day for night; your light for darkness; your peace and tranquillity for doubt and fear. You fear that God has withdrawn from you, and say, "O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness." Now, instead of possessing cheering comforts, you walk in darkness, and have no light. Your heaven is clothed with blackness. The light of God's countenance is withdrawn, and he hides his face from you. You fear that you have been a self-deceiver. You walk in darkness, and your prospects for eternity are full of uncertainty; you know not whither you are traveling, to heaven or hell;

you are full of fearful apprehensions; and all that should fill your soul with comfort, only tends to increase your sorrows.

Painful as is this condition, all its pains and sorrows have been felt by many who now rest in heaven. Many a child of light has walked in darkness; many an heir of heaven encountered doubts, and fears, and terrors by the way. The word of God represents those who are the heirs of "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for" them, as "for a season, if need be, in heaviness through manifold temptations;" and directs his children how to act in circumstances so painful. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."

If thus overwhelmed with spiritual distress, devoutly inquire, whence proceeds your sorrow? Why has God withdrawn his presence from you? Why does he permit you to walk in darkness? Perhaps the cause lies in yourself. You have perhaps yielded to some temptation or indulged in some besetting sin. Hence flows your want of peace, your dread of God. Your own conscience condemns you. An uneasy conscience has perhaps kept you from the throne of grace. If it be so, be assured that God is dealing in mercy with you to deprive you of spiritual peace. You cannot expect that God should become the minister of sin, and encourage you in it, by favoring you as much with spiritual comforts when you sin against him, as when you watch, and pray, and walk humbly with him. If this is the source of your happiness, never expect peace till

the sin which brings your sorrow is forsaken. Would you enjoy that blessing, flee from your sin; exercise renewed repentance, apply to the blood of sprinkling, and walk humbly and holily with your God. Perhaps, if you have not been indulging in what is esteemed positively sinful, you have given way to a light and thoughtless spirit; have indulged in levity inconsistent with your profession, or in trifling unworthy of an heir of heaven. This is a frequent cause of spiritual distress.

There are, however, many reasons for which God may suffer his children for a time to walk in darkness, even where they have not been indulging in sin or levity.

§ 9. Perhaps God designs to deepen your humility. Thankfulness to God rises highest in the happy days of spiritual joy, but humility is often strengthened most in the dark hours of spiritual distress. Then, when the Christian sees utter unworthiness clinging to all he is and he does; then, when he discerns such a world of iniquity in his heart, that the sight surprises and alarms his soul; then it is that he sinks into the depths of self-abasement, and feels that salvation is all of grace. Perhaps you need to sink there, to strip you of spiritual pride, or to wean you from all self-dependence, and to make you feel your utter helplessness, wretchedness, and ruin. Something of this the Christian learns when he is convinced of sin and enters the way of religion by receiving the Savior; but this important lesson is often taught him more impressively in the dark day of spiritual sorrow than it was in the hours of his early penitence

Or perhaps, by leaving you for a while in darkness

God designs to teach you more of the Savior's worth, and to cause you to bind the Gospel closer to your heart. Perhaps, though you felt so much sorrow for sin as led you to Christ, you have not felt enough of the worth of Christ; but now, while the remembrance of former sins distresses you, and you discern in your own heart an extent of iniquity before unthought of; now you can say, with feelings hitherto unknown by you, I am the chief of sinners, but Jesus died for me. Perhaps God intends to teach you to prize your mercies and his presence more. Light is most sweet when coming out of darkness; health, when rising from the bed of pain; liberty, when escaping from confinement; and summer, after a long and dreary winter; so the soul learns to prize the presence of God, by being for a time denied that joy. A young disciple of Jesus, who had lost much of her comfort by giving way to a light and trifling spirit, lately observed to the writer, that if she could attain what she once enjoyed, and which she thought she should never lose, she would not part with it again for ten thousand worlds. Perhaps you have not valued your mercies enough; seek them again, and when obtained, prize them more, and press onward to that happy world where no cloud will ever rise, no drooping winter be felt in the soul; but God's presence will be enjoyed through one eternal day.

Perhaps God permits you to walk in darkness, that he may exercise and brighten your graces. Faith and love are exercised most in the dark and cloudy day of sorrow. To believe when all is pleasing, when peace smiles on the soul and comforts bestrew its way, is an easy thing; but to believe when all is dark and dreary, when no comfort is felt within, when no light is seen

without—this is the faith that God values. To love when the soul feels the assurance of God's love, and the joys that love imparts, is easy; but to love when his presence is withdrawn, when doubts and fears infest the soul, when hope is languishing, and comforts apparently dead—this is love of a stronger, nobler kind. God doubtless often exercises his children with spiritual trials, to call faith and love into exercise. Thus they who are in heaviness through manifold temptations, are said to be so, "That the trial of their faith might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearance of Jesus Christ."

§ 10. Be not therefore dismayed if comfort seems for a while withdrawn from you. If the cause lies obviously in your sin, lukewarmness or negligence, seek grace to correct it; but if you cannot find it there, then think what may be the intention of the Most High in thus trying you, and pray that the design may be fully accomplished. The dealings of God in the dispensations of his grace often resemble those in the world of nature. Look at a harvest field. Behold the waving crop ready for the garner. Yet think what various changes it has undergone. If the year had been all winter, the seed would not have grown; if all summer, it would have been parched up; if all wet, it would have rotted; if all dry, it would have withered. God has given a right proportion of each, and the field is white unto the harvest. God, their gracious God, portions to his children the needful share of health and sickness, ease and pain: gives spiritual peace, that they may run in the way of his commandments; or withdraws his presence, and leaves them in darkness, that he may lay them low at his feet, or correct them for

their sins, or kill their corruptions, or exercise their graces; and he does all things well.

§ 11. Perhaps you imagine that your want of spiritual comfort argues that you are destitute of divine grace, and that you have always been a deceiver. Indeed we should watch against self-deception; and such fears should occasion serious self-examination; but if, after such examination, you find no real reason for indulging such fears, reject them as the suggestions of the wicked one, designed to harass and distress your soul. Were you to see a dutiful child, that was always concerned to do his father's will, and fearful of displeasing him, lamenting bitterly that he did not love his father more, and desiring, above all earthly good, a stronger affection for his parent; would you not argue, That child loves his father, though he now hardly believes it; if he had no love, he would feel no such sorrows, and cherish no such desires? You may apply similar reasoning to your own case, or that of any child of God who walks in darkness, but who walks with God.

An aged Christian, in much distress of mind, was once complaining to a friend of his miserable condition; and among other things said, "that which troubles me most is, that God will be dishonored by my fall." His friend hastily catching at this expression, used it for the purpose of consoling him: "Art thou careful of the honor of God; and dost thou think God hath no care of thee, and of thy salvation? A soul forsaken of God cares not what becomes of the honor of God. Therefore be of good cheer: if God's heart were not towards thee, thine would not be towards God, or towards the remembrance of his name."

§ 12. Perhaps with some or all of these inward conflicts and sorrows you have to encounter outward opposition. The world reviles and slanders you, because you are no longer conformed to its corruptions. You are perhaps represented as a schismatic, an enthusiast, or a fanatic; or as a melancholy creature, going out of your senses, because you will follow the dictates of Jesus, and tread where he trod before you. Your regard to his precepts is deemed unnecessary preciseness; your religion is pronounced hypocrisy, and your wisdom folly. Your former associates make you the butt of their ridicule. Your nearest relatives oppose your holy choice, and are changed into enemies because you have embraced the Gospel of Jesus. Perhaps some who read these lines may have parents who even threaten to disown them, and to cast them helpless on the wide world if they adhere to their religion; or employers who will dismiss them from their service if they faithfully follow Jesus Christ. This kind of persecution still exists. The carnal mind is as much enmity against God as it was when Nero, or Pliny, or Trajan, or Diocletian ravaged with persecution the church of God. Sixteen hundred years ago Tertullian observed, "Some are arrived to that pitch of aversion to the very name of Christian, that they seem to have entered into covenant with hatred, and bargained to gratify this passion at the expense of all the satisfactions of human life, acquiescing in the grossest of injuries rather than the hated thing of Christian should come within their doors. The husband, now cured of all his former jealousy by his wife's conversion to Christianity, turns her and her new modesty out of doors together, choosing to dwell with an adulteress

sooner than a Christian: the father, so tender of the undutiful son in his Gentile state, disinherits him now when he becomes obedient by becoming a Christian: the master, heretofore so good to his unfaithful slave, discards him now upon his fidelity and his religion. So that the husband had rather have his wife false, the father his son a rebel, the master his servant a rogue, than to have them Christians and good: so much is the hatred of our name above all the advantages of virtue flowing from it. Our heavenly Master, and his heavenly religion, are both unknown, and both condemned, without any other consideration but that of the bare name of Christian." All this is but a faithful description of the spirit of many opposers of genuine religion in the present age.

In the midst of trials of this kind you have cause for joy rather than sorrow. They are what the holy Jesus told his first disciples to expect. "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved." "And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death." "A man's foes shall be they of his own household." They are what he himself encountered, and need we wonder that a world which hated him, should hate his followers? "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household?" If they represented him as a glutton, a drunkard, and a stirrer of sedition, surely you need not be surprised, and should not be pained at any scandals they may cast on you! If friends oppose your choice, and deem your wisdom folly, remember his brethren at one time did not believe in him, but said

he was beside himself. If the haters of holiness revile, and mock, and injure you, hearken while your Lord says, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Since he was hated, why should it grieve you to be hated by a world that hated him? Why should you mourn at being reviled, when he was reviled before you? Rather rejoice; and if ever disposed to mourn and droop on account of the opposition you experience, then hear him saying, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Thus expect little from the world that hated him; but rejoice, that, if you are dead with him, you shall also live with him; if you suffer, you shall also reign with him; if you confess him on earth, he will also confess you before his Father, and before his angels. Important period! How trifling then will appear the ridicule of the gay, and the more open enmity of the hostile! Then all the trials of faithful piety will end. Look therefore to the crown, and you will not tremble at the cross. Think of hearing, at the end of life's short day, those gladdening words, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" and the enmity and contempt of the haters of religion will be as trifling as the chatterings

of a magpie, and will no more prevent your pressing on to heaven than the buzzings of an angry fly.

§ 13. Had the disciples of Jesus no other enemies than the flesh and the world to oppose their progress to heaven, the Christian life would be in reality a warfare. But the word of God discloses to your view other enemies not less formidable. However Unitarians and infidels may reject or ridicule the notion of *satanic opposition* directed against the growth of piety, no truth is revealed in the divine word with more clearness. Satan is there described as an active, a busy, and a powerful enemy; "as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." This language does not represent him as a weak or timid, a supine or careless foe; but as a mighty enemy, ready to attack the strongest; a watchful enemy, whoever sleeps, not sleeping. The Christian is declared to have to maintain a conflict with this enemy, and with his associates in guilt and ruin. "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." How awful is this statement! The angels that kept not their first estate are the rulers of this dark world. Over multitudes they reign with an undisputed sway, and exert all their hellish arts to harass and to injure those who are translated out of their dark kingdom. The followers of Jesus, in pressing on to heaven, have to encounter their opposition, and to wrestle with them.

§ 14. The great end which Satan and his guilty associates pursue is the destruction of the immortal soul;

and a principal means by which he advances his hellish purposes doubtless is deception. Hence we read of his deceiving the nations; of the depths of Satan; of the wiles of the devil; and of Satan's devices. Are persons brought out of a state of carelessness and presumption, they are tempted to think that it is too late for them to seek for mercy; that their sins are too many and great to be forgiven; that their doom is fixed, and that it is vain for them to seek for happiness. If these views are not sufficient to prevent their following after salvation, it is then perhaps suggested to them that they have sinned the unpardonable sin, and therefore that there can be no hope for them; or they are tempted to build on some other foundation instead of that which God has laid. Their minds are harassed and tempted to indulge unbelief. In prayer a variety of suggestions are powerfully injected into the mind, till, distracted and perplexed, the Christian can scarcely pray: then he is tempted to think that he had better not pray at all, than pray so imperfectly; and if he listens to the tempter, Satan gains an advantage over him.

Is the temptation designed to draw the believer into sin? The sin is dressed out in its most alluring colors. The advantages, enjoyments and pleasures to be obtained by compliance are all arrayed before him. The bait is presented, but the hook is hidden. It is perhaps suggested that the sin is a small one, and may afterwards be repented of; or that many pious persons have fallen into worse crimes: as Noah, David, and Peter, who yet found forgiveness and happiness. Or perhaps the soul is tempted by the suggestion that it would not actually transgress the divine laws; that so much strictness as some professors of religion plead for, is unne-

cessary preciseness; and thus it is rendered bold in venturing on temptation, and the next step is transgression. Then from sin it is led on to sin; from smaller to greater crimes, till peace, and hope, and faith, and happiness are all sacrificed. Thus Peter fell: he first was tempted to a lie; to this another lie was soon added; and many hours had not elapsed before perjury and profaneness were added to the falsehoods previously uttered. So David first indulged unlawful desires for Bathsheba; then sunk into adultery; and to shield her and himself from the shame of discovery, proceeded, by the sword of the enemy, to murder the man he had so deeply injured. Had Peter at first been tempted to curse and to swear, or David to murder Uriah, that he might gain Bathsheba, probably the tempter's design had been frustrated; but step by step they were drawn to the precipice from which they fell. There is no device of the devil which the Christian should fear more than that of being rendered bold in *venturing on temptation*, and giving way to what may be thought *smaller sins*.

§ 15. In your warfare with the prince of darkness you have no occasion for surprise or alarm at the strength, the repetition, or the horrid nature of his suggestions to temptations. Read the history of our Lord's temptation, and it may furnish you many useful lessons. Satan tempted Jesus—hence you may learn that the most pious may expect his assaults. He *persevered* in tempting Jesus, and when foiled at one temptation employed another. Hence it is evident that Satan will not easily depart from those whose faith and piety he is anxious to destroy. He tempted Jesus with the most horrid of temptations, even that of fall-

ing down and worshiping himself—a devil. Need the Christian then be surprised if the enemy, who presented a temptation so horrid to his Lord, should harass him with suggestions equally dreadful? His last and principal offer to the Savior, was the world—"All this will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." This is the most successful of the false, but alluring offers that he still employs to keep or draw the soul from God. When tempting Jesus, he backed his impious suggestions by passages from even the word of God, and by wresting the Scriptures. Thus the kingdom of Satan is still upheld, and multitudes undone for ever. Yet consider that Jesus, though tempted even to worship the devil, continued holy, harmless, and undefiled. It is not therefore temptation, but yielding to temptation, that stains the soul with sin. Often are the friends of Jesus distressed and perplexed from not regarding this distinction. They think they cannot be his followers who have such horrid thoughts or temptations as they have. At such times they should look to their Lord, and think, Am I, or can I be tempted worse than he? Why then despond?

That you may overcome in your warfare, watchfulness is a most momentous Christian duty. The Lord Jesus Christ inculcates a watchful spirit. "Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is. I say unto you all, Watch." "Blessed is he that watcheth." "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Take unto you the whole armor of God, and you will, through Jesus's strength, triumph over the wicked one. Jesus persevered and triumphed, and angels came

and ministered unto him. Follow him, and he will minister unto your wants; and when the last temptation is over, angels will come and minister to your triumphant spirit, and bear it away as a happy conqueror to worlds of light.

Pray much. By prayer you will conquer. Avoid idleness. The slothful are peculiarly open to the assaults of the wicked one. With prayer unite reading the Scriptures and devout meditation. Above all, endeavor to live under the influence of faith in God and Christ in heaven. To communicate your trials and temptations to Christian friends, may also assist you in overcoming the wicked one. An excellent Puritan writer mentions a man who was tempted to blasphemy for the long term of twenty years, and kept in almost continual terror. He thought there was no man so vile, and who had such thoughts as he; and that if the world knew what they were, he should be abhorred as a monster. He was often tempted to suicide, principally on the ground that it was a pity such a blasphemer as he supposed himself should longer live. But hearing the subject of these dreadful suggestions preached upon, and afterwards conversing privately respecting them, he was happily delivered from his sorrows. Be faithful and persevere.

§ 16. Amidst all the discouragement and distress of your spiritual warfare, never forget that you have a faithful "High Priest who is passed into the heavens," but who knows "how to succor them that are tempted," as "he was in all points tempted like as" they are, "yet without sin." Jesus felt the sting of affliction, the assaults of Satan and the sorrows of spiritual desertion.

In your darkest hour you may approach him and say, Blessed Lord, behold me in a case that once was thine —harassed by those hellish foes that once harassed thee; but thou hast conquered, and wilt thou not give thy poor follower grace and strength to conquer too?

Why distrust the gracious Savior? Are not his promises as rich as heavenly love can make them? as firm as eternal truth can fix them? as free as an undone world can want? Art thou his servant? He says, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." Art thou one of his flock? he declares, "My sheep shall never perish, neither shall any one (neither man nor devil) pluck them out of my hand." Or art thou laden with sin and full of fears? he says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is said that when bishop Butler lay on his death-bed, he said to his chaplain, "Though I have endeavored to avoid sin and please God to the utmost of my power, yet, from the consciousness of perpetual infirmities, I am still afraid to die."—"My lord," said the chaplain, "you have forgotten that Jesus Christ is a Savior."—"True," was the answer; "but how shall I know that he is a Savior for me?"—"It is written, *Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*"—"True," said the bishop; "and I am surprised that, though I have read that Scripture a thousand times over, I never felt its virtue till this moment; and now I die happy."

In your Christian pilgrimage, in your spiritual warfare, forget not that you have a SAVIOR: and let that Savior be all your comfort and support.

§ 17. Think of your heavenly Father's love. Jesus, speaking of him, said to his disciples even after they

had fallen through unbelieving fears, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." Precious declaration! With such a Father as the blessed God, why should his penitent, though unworthy child despond and fear? Richer mercy you cannot need than that which God displays. Promises more free you cannot desire. Though one sin allowed to reign would undo an immortal soul, yet had a soul which comes to God by Christ sins as numerous as the drops of morning dew, the blood of Jesus would wash them all away. Cannot you trust in God to help you? He bade the sun shine: has he not power to shine into your sad heart? Does he want the inclination? It cannot be that he who gave Christ for you, can be unwilling, with Christ, to give whatever your wants require. Jesus has died. Such has been his infinite pity, that through his appointment Jesus has died. O, comprehend but this aright and nothing more will be needed to banish thy fears, to raise thy hopes, to subdue thy unbelief, to fire and to fill thee with trust and delight in thy great, and good, and gracious God. Think of him as a Father. Does not a father pity his feeble child? If the child lie sick and afflicted, unable to utter any thing but sobs and groans, will he pity that child the less? God is a Father to those that seek him; a kinder Father than any earthly parent; he knows his children's sorrows; he sees their feebleness, and knows their frame is dust. He pities them, and hast thou been led to seek him, then be assured he pities thee.

§ 18. To animate you in pressing forward to the Christian crown, often think of those who, through faith and patience, are inheriting the promises. Turn

to the first ages of Christianity. Christians then esteemed it an honor to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. They forced their passage to heaven through all that is most dreadful; and sought admission there at the expense of all that is most dear. Riches, health, ease, pleasure, and life, all were trifles in their esteem. Then tormentors were weary of inflicting pain before martyrs were weary of bearing it. Their path was no smooth and flowery way: sorrows beset its entrance and attended its course, and flames and tortures were at its end: and yet they trod it. These indeed seem like a different race of beings, like creatures of a different world. Ah, my friend; there lay the distinction between them and many that profess the same Gospel now. They were creatures of a different world. They lived on earth, to be ready for heaven. Hence they trod the path to glory, however thorny, and rejoiced in hastening to an early crown. Polycarp, when condemned to martyrdom, was so fearful lest the prayers of his friends would prevent the execution of the sentence, that he begged them to forbear: "I fear," said he, "lest your love should injure me." Does one of all those martyred myriads now repent? Did one when landing on the heavenly shore ever think, I have borne too much for him who bore the cross for me? We need not go so far back to view the patience of the saints. Look back a hundred and fifty or two hundred years, and see the persecutions endured by those of whom the world was not worthy. See dungeons filled with their captives, and deserts peopled with their exiles. See persecutors hunting out their little haunts, denying them the enjoyment of religious worship even in solitary fields or lonely woods. Behold soldiers en-

tering their assemblies, disturbing their meetings, silencing their ministers, and dragging hearers and preachers to fines, confiscations, and prisons. O be not slothful! though not called to encounter their sorrows, imitate their lives; cherish their fervent attachment to the absent Savior; and their fond eagerness for a better world. When the world tempts you, and Satan suggests, Your hope is vain; then think of them who once had all these trials, and many more; but who overcame through the blood of the Lamb.

§ 19. When tempted to despond or shrink in the day of conflict, then hear your Lord saying, Will you go away; you for whom I died; to whom I have been a shepherd and friend; who have professed so much love to me; who have taken on your soul such solemn vows, and sealed them so often at the table of your Lord; will you go away? You who never found me faithless—and never will—will you go away? *will* you? shall Satan triumph? have you considered the folly? have you weighed the sin? have you measured the ingratitude of hearkening to the tempter? and will you go away? O do you not reply, Holy Jesus, where should I go? If I left thee, where should I find a Savior? where go for pardon, peace, salvation, and eternal life? Keep me, and I will not go away. Though the tempter's suggestion were true, that my hope is vain, yet if I perish, at thy feet will I die!

If tempted to give religion up, hear your Lord saying, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no one take thy crown." All the enemies thou hast been instructed to watch against, will try to rob thee of that prize; but hold the beginning of thy confidence fast unto the end. Think of the worth of that crown of which they would

rob thee. Think of the price which was paid, that that crown might adorn thy head, thou child of dust! a price no less precious than the blood of the Lamb. Think of the love that would bestow it on thee! think of the raptures of receiving, and of the heaven of enjoying, that thornless crown! Whatever thou mayest lose, or suffer, or fear, or dread, still hold this fast! Though it does not yet beam around thy honored head, yet follow Jesus, and it shortly will. Hear him speaking to thee: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." No meaner hand than mine shall give the glorious boon. Thy Lord's own hand will bestow the prize. Fear not lest thou shouldst not attain the blessing, for I will give it thee.

"Be faithful unto death." This is all; and come when death may, then this crown, not of merit but of grace, is thine. This promise was given to those who had to pass through persecution. You are not called to such trials; be faithful then when encountering far lighter opposition; and remember that the spirit of martyrs should animate every Christian. If you are afraid of being singularly pious; if you fear a sneer, or a laugh, or the words fanatic, enthusiast, or methodist; if you shrink from your duty for fear of offending a friend or an employer, can you think that such faith and fortitude would stand a much severer trial? Can you think that you should be faithful unto death, amidst taunts and torments? If this be the case, are you faithful now? Does not Jesus say, Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of man be ashamed? O watch against a cowardly spirit in religion!

It is true, our difficulties are not like those of some

who have preceded us. They are less formidable; and perhaps on that account more dangerous. When attacked by the enemies they encountered, there remained no opportunity for parleying with the trial. No alternative remained to them but victory or death. But the evils we encounter in our spiritual warfare seem to demand less decision, and so are often more destructive. The warm beams of the sun led the traveler, in the fable, to throw aside the cloke which the rough tempest could not tear from him.

Look to that crown! and to him who gives it! Look to those promises that they are inheriting, who in his strength have overcome. They felt all your trials; they knew all your sorrows; they encountered all your dangers, and struggled with all your enemies; had hearts as cold and groveling; enemies as many and as mighty; fears as painful; doubts as perplexing, and temptations as harassing; but they overcame through the blood of the Lamb. Now they are inheriting the promises; and opposition, and danger, and death, and temptation, and sin, are things unknown where they repose. A few years ago many of them were in the field of warfare, but now in the land of victory. Their pilgrimage is ended; their warfare done; their voyage of life is finished; they have reached the harbor, and landed on "the peaceful shore of blest eternity." The crown of life, the rivers of pleasure, the fullness of joy, the house not made with hands, the mansions in Jehovah's dwelling, the heaven we desire, the eternity that fills our souls with conflicting hopes, and fears—all, all are theirs. Happy conquerors! happy end of the struggles of a few fleeting years! And may you ere long enjoy the same? You may. Eternal love has opened to your soul the gate

of heaven. Eternal love would place upon your head the crown of life. Your journey is no longer than theirs; your enemies no mightier. Your helps are no less. Jesus was their strength; and he would be yours. Your encouragements are no smaller. To them he promised immortality, and the crown of life; and he would give the same precious gift to you. O blessed immortality! is this the gift of Jesus to a pardoned penitent that once deserved the depths of hell? O crown of life, of glory! is it this that his kind hand will place on every humble believer's unworthy head? Blessed gifts! blessed recompense for a life of fourscore years, wholly devoted to his love and service! Of fourscore years! whose years are those? more than probable not yours, not mine. But if they were, fourscore years or fourscore moments are the same, when compared with those boundless, endless oceans of ages that eternity contains. O the heights, and depths, and lengths of that love which gives, as a free gift to an unworthy sinner, that eternal life! Precious encouragement for following the Lamb, through light or darkness, life or death! Look to him, and look to heaven, then onward go, till life concludes, and Jesus gives the crown.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON BACKSLIDING.

§ 1. MANY are the painful spectacles presented in this world to the Christian's view, but none more painful than to see those, who once promised fair for heaven, turning back into perdition. In all ages this sad sight has been too frequently beheld. Among the twelve apostles was a Judas, who betrayed his Lord. Among the companions of the blessed Paul was a Demas, who forsook him, "having loved this present world." Among those to whom he preached the Gospel were foolish Galatians, who, as if bewitched, obeyed not Christ crucified; and fallen Corinthians, of whom he said, "I fear lest my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned, and have not repented of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness which they have committed."

No new thing then happens to the flock of Jesus, when some of whom they once hoped well, forsake the Lord. Nor, though it pain, need this discourage his sincere disciples. He knows his own, and says of them, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis that have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy."

§ 2. The *causes* of backsliding are many and various. Probably the prevailing cause is the want of real grace. Many profess religion who never possessed it. When they fall away the church of Christ sustains no real

loss; the number traveling to heaven is not diminished; for they were hypocrites or self-deceivers. The word of God represents this as a principal cause of backsliding. "They went out from us, but they were not of us." "He that receiveth the seed into stony places, is he that heareth the word, and with joy receiveth it: yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while." Persons of this description never were the children of God. They might seem pleased and profited, but the *root* was always wanting. The foolish virgins were always different from the wise. They had the lamp, but they never had the oil; no one is truly a disciple of Christ who does not at heart forsake all things for him. Many profess religion that are never brought to this. They leave some sins, they make some sacrifices while their feelings are roused, and perhaps they stand for a time; but when the world bids high enough for their services, they renounce religion, and return to the ways they professed to forsake. A celebrated statesman used to say that every man has his price. However we may disbelieve this assertion, we may assert, that every one who professes religion, without being truly converted to God, has, *as to this world*, his price. For some the world must bid higher than for others. The offer of an ungodly, but pleasing wife or husband, is a price sufficiently high for multitudes; for this they will forsake their profession, and renounce their Lord and christian friends. Others want a higher price; but all who have not the root of religion within, will only stand their ground till the world tempts them with something sufficiently valuable, in their esteem, to draw them aside. Love to the world is a common cause of back-

sliding. "Demas hath forsaken me," said the apostle Paul, "having loved this present world." Anxious cares respecting the things of time, and inordinate attachment to them, occasions others to fall away. "The cares of this world," among the lower and middling classes of society; and the "deceitfulness of riches," among the wealthy; "and the lusts of other things entering in," in all stations, and ranks, and ages, "choke the word, and they become unfruitful." The fear of man insnares some; the love of gain entangles others; and worldly companions and worldly marriages draw multitudes away.

§ 3. Backsliding may properly be distinguished into *secret* and open. The former takes place in the case of those who do not openly renounce religion, but who no longer feel its vital power, or on whom its influence is gradually declining. Such was the case of the church at Ephesus, when the Lord Jesus, after commending their labors, fidelity and patience, added, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." Such also was the case of many in the church at Sardis, when the Savior said, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die." Such also, in a still more deplorable degree, was their case at Laodicea, of whom he said, "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." In none of these cases was the form of religion laid aside. But, alas! its

life was going, or gone. They at Ephesus, who had fallen least, had left their first love. That they had dreadfully, though secretly and inwardly fallen, is evident from the admonition which the Lord addressed to them. They at Sardis had sunk still lower. All was not dead, but all was dying. They at Laodicea had sunk the lowest, and they were in a kind of middle state between the careless worldling and the zealous Christian. Not cold, as those who are dead to every religious feeling; not hot, as those who are pressing on to glory; but like lukewarm water, in a middle condition, between the cold and the hot.

As some thus secretly backslide by losing love to the Savior and religion, others do so by forsaking him as the ground of their hope. The apostle evidently represents the Galatians as falling away from Christ: "Christ is become of no effect unto you; whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace." The sin of those who are thus addressed, appears to have been the uniting the works of the law with Christ, as the ground of their dependence. In doing so, they are described as getting into a state in which they would lose their interest in the Savior, and thus in reality fall away from him.

Secret backsliding is inexpressibly dangerous. Persons who have thus declined from religion may yet maintain its outward forms, frequent the house of prayer occasionally, keep up some connection with the church of Christ, and feel few or no suspicions respecting their real state. The Lord describes such as saying that they are rich, and have need of nothing; but declares that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. How dreadful is their delusion!

They think that all is well, when all is ill; and deem all safe for eternity, till they enter that solemn state, and find that their religion was delusion, and that they are lost for ever! How needful a duty is self-examination! how needful is it to watch the heart, and to keep the heart with all diligence, since out of it are the issues of life!

Open backsliding takes place when they who have lost the life and power of religion openly forsake their adherence to the Savior, and return to the world, to folly, and sin.

§ 4. In both cases backsliding is an inexpressibly dreadful evil. No language can describe its mischief, and where willful and continued, no words express its enormity.

This dreadful evil is commonly a gradual evil. Few are backsliders all at once. Backsliders, in turning from God and happiness, commonly go step by step till they plunge into final apostacy and eternal perdition. First, love to the Savior and religion declines in their hearts. As this love lessens, their hatred to sin becomes weaker and the world regains its influence. Some then give way to a spirit of pride, and vanity, and self-importance. Others yield their affections to the world. They allow this to be busy with them in their closets and in the house of God. By degrees secret communion with God is neglected. Little delight is found in devotion, and private prayer is first occasionally, and then habitually disregarded. If at the head of a family, family worship is dropped. Public duties are soon neglected. They grow less attentive to the house of God. Its services are thought long and tedi-

ous; and first one is neglected, and then another. The Lord's table is slighted. Social meetings for prayer and religious conversation are altogether abandoned. Their inclination is turned another way: they had rather spend two hours a day in trifling conversation, than half an hour a week in seeking spiritual benefit. They grow more and more wearied of the strictness of religion. Their taste for its pleasures gradually dies. Their Christian friends are forsaken. They grow tired of true friends, and pleased with false ones: like the Israelites who were pleased with the spies, but thought Joshua and Moses their enemies. They form new intimacies, or revive old ones with those that are strangers to the path of peace. At length they become again mere followers of the world, and their conduct and deportment are commonly suited to their fallen condition. Do Christian friends endeavor to stop them in their progress to destruction? In some a few painful feelings are excited, some half-formed resolutions are made; but all soon vanishes, and again they pursue their declining path. Others receive with disgust the warnings of Christian friendship, and go on without perceiving their folly and insensible of their guilt. "I do not perceive that I am fallen," says the lukewarm professor. Unhappy man! why then do all else perceive it? Why is your place at the house of God so often empty? Why are all religious exercises with your Christian friends neglected? Why is the table of the Lord slighted? Why is the prosperity of the Savior's cause a matter of no concern to you? Why so different from what you once were? "Oh," replies the self-deceiver, "I am dissatisfied. The minister does not preach as he used to do, nor friends

behave as they formerly did." Such are the excuses and complaints of many backsliders. Unhappy creatures! they are like a man that, having lost his sight, finds fault with the sun instead of his eyes, and says of that bright luminary at noon-day, "It does not shine as it used to do."

§ 5. On the *guilt and mischiefs* of backsliding the writer will insert, with some small alterations, a letter written several years ago to a young female who had fallen from religion, but of whose restoration there appeared some flattering, though, alas! delusive hope.

"My dear Friend,—Allow me, by writing a few lines to you, to give you another expression of my anxious concern for your eternal welfare; yes, your eternal welfare; for what will long seem worth a single thought, except the blessings of eternity!

"I would hope that the repentance and grief for your conduct, which you expressed on the Sabbath, have not again vanished like the morning cloud or the early dew. I prayed for you, not merely at that time, but often before; and if you truly return to the paths of peace, shall think these prayers answered.

"And what, Sarah, is now the state of your heart? Is it again thoughtless? again hardened? God forbid! and grant that it may be tender, humble and penitent! My dear friend, you have need of repentance. I do not wish to upbraid you with any thing that is past; yet love to your soul makes it needful to say to you—You have need of repentance, of deep repentance. Surely you must have fallen away far from God. But are you penitent? If you are, I would not break the bruised reed. Rather would I direct you to the promises of your loving, though lately forsaken God. Then

hear him saying in his word, 'Return unto me, and I will return unto you.' 'Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.' 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' 'The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' To you these promises are made; let them not be made in vain. Still God is willing to receive you; still Jesus is willing to welcome you. His blood may yet cleanse you from your sins, and his kind hand support your feeble steps. Behold backsliding Peter. He found mercy; and, gone from this world, joins in the songs of the redeemed above. Oh, Sarah, seek the Savior's grace afresh: you will not seek in vain:

> 'His bleeding heart will make you room,
> 'His open'd arms will take you in.'

Yet he would give you peace, give you pardon, give you heaven, and join you soon to his redeemed above. And does it not melt your heart to think, 'And would my injured Savior again receive me? and would my forsaken God again welcome me?' He would, indeed he would. 'And may I sit down with his saints above? and may my happy spirit adore his love, when this now healthful body is a lifeless corpse, and this cold heart is colder in the grave? O! may eternal blessedness then be mine?' It may. 'And shall I slight it longer? Shall I turn from the way of life? Shall I forsake my kind Redeemer? Break, O my God! the hard heart that has deceived me, and let it never deceive me more!'

"But, my dear friend, while the promises of grace should encourage your return; to strengthen your

earnestness, you may profitably unite with the motives they furnish, the consideration of what you were doing. You had, I am persuaded, nearly given up religion altogether. If you had done so quite, think what you would have done. Where would have been your hopes, your friends, your comforts, and where, ere long, your soul? In such a state, if turning your eyes to heaven, you might have said, There dwells the Lord; once I could say, There dwells *my* God; but alas! no longer mine. Once he was my friend; but now I have made him my enemy. His love was my portion; but it is mine no more. There dwells the Savior, once *my* Savior; but now I have no interest in him. Others are happy in his love; but I have lost that happiness: others are safe under his care; but I am out of his protection: others have their sins blotted out in his blood; once I thought mine were; but I have crucified him afresh, and brought a double load of guilt upon my own soul. There dwell also his faithful friends. They toiled and suffered here, but rest in heaven; and once I hoped to partake of their joys; but now that hope is gone. God is my God no longer; Christ is my Savior no longer; heaven my hoped-for home no longer.

"I do not say, Sarah, that these should be your melancholy reflections now. I pray that this letter may find you returning to God. But they might have been so, if you had continued backsliding; and should be so, if you ever fall from Christ. And let the thought of the dreadful danger you have been in fill you with watchfulness and humility, and lead you to prayer. Great has been your danger; for, O! it is beyond human power to describe the evils of backsliding from

the living God. To backslide altogether, is to give up God; to give up Christ; to give up hope, comfort, and heaven; to make yourself the slave of Satan; to prepare your soul for a miserable eternity; to throw eternal life away, and choose eternal death. To backslide, is to slight your best friends, and please your worst enemy; to make heaven mourn, and hell rejoice; to act as guilty a part as Satan himself acted; to treat with the basest ingratitude a loving God; and to trample under foot the pains, and groans, and sorrows of a dying Savior. To backslide, is to choose devils for your companions instead of angels; hell for your home instead of heaven; weeping, wailing, and despair for your portion, instead of peace and praise. In fine, Sarah, to backslide is to act so wicked, so mad, so hellish a part, that even devils themselves can scarcely wish any to act a worse. And had you begun to act this part? God be praised, if you now mourn that you did so! Flee to him, my friend, afresh! Plead with him the promises I have mentioned from his word. Praise him that he did not give you over to a hardened heart! and O may you hereafter praise him for this in heaven!

"Depend upon it, my dear friend, the view now given you of the guilt of backsliding is not too strong. The word of God represents confirmed backsliders as 'turned aside after Satan;' as 'having damnation, because they have cast away their faith;' as drawing 'back unto perdition;' as being shut out of the eternal rest; as crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame; as having trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing; as

doing despite to the Spirit of grace; as falling into the hands of the living God, who is to them a consuming fire; as having their latter end worse than the beginning. For them there remains a certain fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. They are those, who, having fallen into the snare of the devil, are taken captive by him at his will. What awful descriptions! how should they rouse you! how alarm you, lest you should turn aside again! To be led captive by Satan—what can be worse? Could you see that dreadful enemy dragging an unhappy soul to perdition, how would you tremble! yet remember that the backslider, though he see it not, is led captive by the devil at his will. Oh, let these awful thoughts lead you to watch and to pray; to look into your own heart; to examine your own state; to distrust yourself; to depend on your Redeemer, and to dread the guilt of backsliding more than the wretchedness to which it leads.

"Again, Sarah, if you have felt the pangs of a wounded conscience, seek for peace afresh through the blood of the Lamb, and let the unhappy hours you have passed, and the tears your fall has occasioned, be so many motives with you to return to God and to cleave to Christ. Surely you have found that thoughtlessness and laughter cannot make the backslider's state happy. You know something of this truth; many others know much of it. I reminded you of a friend who told me how happy he was in the ways of God. Peace with God made life pleasant. The night and the day were alike comfortable, and fear fled far from him. But the tempter suggested to him, What need so much ado about religion? These words, or something

to this effect, run in his mind. At length he yielded; he went backward, and the tempter triumphed. And now his comforts were gone. He could not lie down at night without fear of waking in eternal torments before the morning. He found it was a bitter as well as guilty thing to forsake his Redeemer. Learn wisdom, Sarah, from your own unhappiness; learn it from that of others. You have been near the edge of a precipice, from which many who reach it never return, but fall from God to rise no more. O be thankful that you have not fallen quite so low! O be watchful lest you should! O strive! O pray! that your repentance be not this time what it was a few months back.

"Should I say more, Sarah; then again I would admonish you to look forward to future things. Think of your dying bed, of your pulse fluttering, your heart failing, your friends bidding you a last farewell, and you departing to meet your God. What comfort it will give you if you have a Savior then! What misery it will cause you, should you then be found a backslider, and then have to think that this friendly warning did you no good! Think yourself standing before your Judge. How happy if you meet his smile! if you find his blood has blotted out every sin, and the sin of forsaking him among the dreadful list! And, Sarah, this happiness will be yours, if you return and cleave to him. But, O! how wretched would you be if you should meet his frown, and hear him say, You forsook me in yonder burning world—depart—depart for ever! What bitter groans would burst from your heart! What bitter tears, if tears can then be shed, flow from your eyes! How would you wish that you had watched, and prayed, and bore all crosses, and endured all hard-

ships, and denied all allurements, and even died for Jesus rather than have forsaken him!

"Go through a church-yard, Sarah. Look at its graves and think, Here lie the young, the healthy, and the strong. Here lie those whom the world once charmed, and those who for it slighted their immortal souls; and what is the world to them now? And soon shall this youthful and healthful body, like theirs, be moldering dust, and soon shall these active limbs be common earth. Soon will my eyes be shut upon the world, and all its cares and all its pleasures will neither pain nor please me in the grave. But then, where will be my immortal spirit? That cannot die; that lives for ever. And shall I sell that soul to Satan, and get this world only for it? and shall I give up my Savior, and throw my hopes away? O, foolish heart, that ever thought of doing it! O, deceived and miserable creature that I have been! for I began to do so.

"My dear friend, what shall I say more? I mourn the thought of seeing you hereafter at the left hand of the eternal Judge. I mourn the thought of never meeting you in the world of peace, to whom I have often broken the bread of life. Could I prevent your departure, never should you depart. Return to God, and peace will again be yours. Return to Jesus, and you will yet be happy. But let it be with full purpose of heart. Let it be with earnest prayer. Let it be with a watchful jealousy lest you should deceive yourself in a concern of endless consequence. Learn to live on Christ. Depend on him. Look to him. Resist the world for a little time, and you shall reach a better. Fight the good fight of faith, and you will soon receive

the crown of glory. The conflict is short, the rest eternal. Then, at length, beyond the reach of sin, Satan, the world, and a deceitful heart, may you there praise the grace which first awakened you—the greater grace that brought you back to God. May God grant it! Amen!"

§ 6. Do I address a backslider? Probably all that has now been said will have no more effect on you than I fear it had on her to whom it was originally written, and who is since gone to her dread account. Yet shall I leave you for ever, and not make one more attempt to restore you to the paths of life? Stop then, I beseech you, before the shades of death close round your head, before the voice of mercy is withdrawn for ever; stop, I beseech you, and a little more consider your ways.

Think of your sin: many are its aggravations. You have sinned against the world. You have thrown a stumbling-block in the way of the unconverted, and exposed them and yourself to the wo denounced by the Lord Jesus Christ: Wo unto the world because of offences; but wo unto that man by whom the offence cometh. And are not you that wretched creature! O, how awful is it for one that has professed religion, to injure the immortal souls of others! and to assist Satan in leading multitudes to perdition!

You have sinned against your relatives. If they are the disciples of Jesus, how have you blasted their hopes respecting you, and how ill requited them for all their tenderness, kindness, and care! If they know him not, you have probably hardened them in carelessness and sin, and thus contributed to sink those who are dearest to you down to hell.

You have sinned against yourself. You might have been respected and beloved, esteemed and useful in life, and have possessed a bright inheritance in heaven; but, alas! how low has your conduct sunk you! how has it deprived you of respect and affection in this life, and of every cheering hope for the eternal world!

You have sinned against your Christian friends. You professed to be their friends, yet have acted the part of the worst enemies. The world is ready to reproach them without cause! but you have given the world occasion to do so; and those who pity you, yet abhor your conduct and disown you, may share in your reproach.

You have sinned against the Lord Jesus Christ. He died to redeem you from sin. Often have you heard of his dying love. You professed to ground your hopes upon it. But O! for all his dying love and living care, for all his sorrows and his bitter death, what a return have you made him! You have pleased Satan, and displeased your Redeemer! have done the will of the devil, and injured your gracious Savior, and brought reproach upon his holy cause!

Think how different is your state now from what it was when you solemnly yielded yourself up to your Redeemer. Look back to that day. Who would then have thought of this? How will the profession you then made rise in the judgment against you! How will every opportunity you have had of sitting down at the Redeemer's table, every sermon you have heard, every warning you have received, aggravate your guilt and double your condemnation! How may the serious friends who once were your companions, and the ministers who have preached to you the everlasting

Gospel, appear as witnesses that you once knew the ways of God, and then turned back unto perdition? They who now pity and pray for you, will then pity you no longer, but own that your destruction is just.

And have all your professions come to this? Did you profess religion, but to make yourself more completely a child of the devil by forsaking it? Has that Redeemer who shed his blood for you deserved no better than this at your hands? Do you thus requite all his sufferings, all his love, and all his goodness? Have you found something more worthy of your love than Christ? That should be a treasure indeed, for which you sell your own soul to the devil, and renounce God, and Christ, and hope, and holiness, and happiness, and heaven. Will your irreligious companions make up to you this dreadful loss? Oh, poor deceived, unhappy creature! if you go on in your way, they who are now your companions in folly will soon be your companions in hell! How will you meet your injured and forsaken Redeemer?

You have sinned against the Holy Spirit. Sin grieves and quenches the Spirit. O beware lest he leave you to yourself; for then you would be sealed up under eternal impenitency of heart.

You have sinned against God. David mentions this as a peculiar aggravation of his iniquity. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." If your profession was sincere, how awfully have you sinned against God! Did you not profess that he had, by his Spirit, opened your eyes to see your ruined state? Did you not believe that, through his love, he gave his Son to die for you? and by the workings of his Spirit led you to the Savior? and made you a child of his own, instead of

an heir of wrath? And is this your return to your merciful Creator?

Your sin against God is of the most dreadfully heinous kind. Are you not under the most solemn vows to be the Lord's? Should you forget them, God will not forget them; and if you break them, your soul will sink under the horrible guilt of lying unto God. How many solemn engagements have you made to be the Lord's! How many vows in private, when no eye but God's saw you, no ear but God's heard you! What solemn professions before the church and the Lord! —the engagements of your baptism, and those repeated again and again at the table of the Lord! Will you break all these promises, and become guilty of telling not one lie only to God, but many? How hateful is a lie! all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. The Lord Jesus describes the devil as the father of lies, and of liars. If lying to men is so hateful, what must it be to lie to God? Of this horrible crime you will be guilty, if you forsake the way of peace. It may be said at last, You promised to be the Lord's; but, miserable liar! you broke all those promises; you took the vows of God upon you, and then became a poor perjured wretch, by slighting all those vows. O my fellow-sinner! no lies are so aggravated as the backslider's lies to God. They are willful lies; for he goes willfully from Christ, and will not stop, though God and man entreat him to return. They are lies whose guilt is heightened by the base ingratitude of forsaking a good God and a gracious Savior; and heightened still more by the horrible choice he makes: he leaves Christ for the world that crucified his Lord;

and forsakes God for sin and the devil. I have read of a backslider that said, "I will not have salvation—nothing for me but hell. Come, O devil, and take me."

Few speak thus plainly; but all that willfully forsake Jesus make this dreadful choice; and would they speak what in reality they do, each would say, Lord Jesus, I renounce thee, I leave thee. Satan, I choose thee as my lord. Heaven I forsake. Come, devil, you shall be my owner, and hell shall be my home. Like Altamont, every backslider may say, "I have been too strong for Omnipotence, I have plucked down ruin."

O, when the Judge comes to pronounce the doom of every liar, what will be their state who have lied to God!

Oh, my fellow-sinner! how can you live with such a load of guilt upon you! how can you make a choice so horrible! Does not eternity haunt your guilty hours? eternal damnation gained—eternal salvation trampled under foot—eternal despair—eternal enmity to God—eternal likeness to the damned—eternal hellishness acquired? Oh, dreadful choice! Perhaps you laugh; but will you laugh in misery? Perhaps you jest; but will you jest in hell? Perhaps you call that place of wo a bugbear; will you on a dying bed? Did Voltaire? Did Tom Paine? did the unhappy wretch, once an infidel, who cried, "O thou blasphemed, yet most indulgent Lord God! hell itself is a refuge, if it hide me from thy frown?"

O listen not to the delusions of unbelief, and the suggestions of an infernal foe! Rather seek mercy. Flee from the wrath to come. Is not death already clad in terrors? Then turn to him who would take the sting of death away.

Behold your once dying, but now risen Lord! Shall

all his dying love be lost on you? Will you reject that gracious, heavenly friend? Behold his dying sorrows, his nameless agonies, his torturing cross, his flowing blood—and think of the immense eternal love that prompted him to bear those sorrows for you. Can you see this, and yet forsake the Lord who bought you? Or think of his kingdom. Think of the meeting of his friends, when all his ransomed flock shall meet in heaven. O unhappy creature! shall your pious friends miss you there? Shall your minister see that you are absent? Shall those, with whom you have often sat down at the Savior's table here, sit down without you there? When the little flock that you belonged to are landed safely, and those who were baptized, or who otherwise professed the Gospel with you, rest above, where will you be? and, millions of years beyond the day of doom, where will you be? If sorrow could be felt in heaven, your Christian friends might mourn while they exclaim, Where now is our poor companion, our brother or sister, that professed to set out in the way to heaven with us, and then, O foolish creature! turned aside? Where now the thoughtless youth, that loved a dying world, and left our Lord? and where all his vain delights? Where now the unhappy girl that once promised fair for glory? and where all for which she denied her Redeemer, and sold her soul? Ah, had she persevered, how different had been her lot! That hapless soul, which is now overwhelmed with eternal night, had then been one of our happy band; had then enjoyed the crown that fadeth not away.

Ah, my friend! these things are not cunningly devised fables. The time will come when your Christian friends, who cleave to the Savior, will rest in hea-

ven; and when, if you return not to him, you and they must part for ever. Oh! if you leave them now, this willful parting is the dread forerunner of an eternal separation. Now to be parted from the flock of God perhaps you feel but little; but what will it be to be parted from it for ever?

If you would return to the ways of peace, inquire seriously, what has been the occasion of your fall? and forsake it, though it may cause you as much pain as to cut off a right hand. Forsake especially worldly associates, or every attempt to return to God will be in vain. Begin with religion again, as you began at first. Seek salvation through the blood of Jesus. Pray much. Frequent divine ordinances. Cherish religious conversation: and God will hear your prayers, and help your soul, and give you grace to escape from the snare of the devil. Then, who will sing of redeeming love with a heart so warm as you? All the motives that love and gratitude can furnish urge you to return. All the motives that can spring from pity to yourself urge your immediate return. All the blessings of eternal life invite you back to God. All the sorrows of the Savior urge you to flee to him. And all the terrors of eternal death should frighten you from the paths of the destroyer.

§ 7. Shall I, by a statement of painful facts that I have witnessed, endeavor to offer one motive more for your immediately returning to the Savior, who is willing to have mercy upon you; or for your watching praying, and persevering? I was once called to see a person in much distress of mind, who professed religion, but who declared that his conduct had been inconsistent with his profession. He spoke of the ex-

treme distress that he then felt, and observing that he had been two months in that condition, said that those two months seemed like two millions of years. At another time he said, "If I possessed it, I would give ten thousand millions of worlds to be out of my present misery." Depend upon it, if you forsake the Savior, or if you have forsaken him, and return not to him, you are hastening to sorrows thus excruciating and severe. On another occasion I repeatedly visited a young woman who had been a professor of religion, but who had fallen, and led a life of carelessness. She was confined to a bed of affliction, and apparently near the grave. With a countenance full of bitter distress, she often spoke of her guilt and folly in such expressions as the following: "I once knew the way; I once could look at death with comfort; but now I cannot—I fear there is no mercy for me." Unexpectedly her illness took a favorable turn; she would then say, "I have suffered much, but not half so much as I deserve for my base ingratitude to God." Speaking of her views when at the worst, she observed she would have given the world to have had her sins forgiven; and said, that at that time she saw nothing before her but death, and hell along with it! How dismal a prospect for the day of suffering or dissolution! Yet if you are, or ever become a backslider, what other prospect can be yours! O watch and pray. Return to the Savior, or cleave to him. So, when your fainting head can rise from its pillow no more; when the blood grows cold at your heart, and your spirit is about to take its final flight; your prospect may be bright as eternal life, and your peace unshaken as the promises of Christ.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONSOLATIONS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS FOR THE CHRISTIAN IN HIS SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGE.

§ 1. You have now contemplated some of the duties of the Christian life, and some of the trials of the Christian warfare; yet many are the fountains of consolation to which the Sacred Scriptures direct the thirsty pilgrim's view. For happiness, look to your Redeemer, to your God, and to your home.

Look to your Redeemer, and listen to the gracious words that proceed from his compassionate lips. "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him. If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

Perhaps your soul may, at times, be cast down and distressed; but remember, when friends are absent, the Lord Jesus is present. The chief Shepherd is for ever near you; and he who laid down his life for you, will doubtless make your comfort and welfare his care. Let your faith but repose aright upon the Savior's love

and nothing will seem dark on this side the grave, and all appear bright beyond it. If at times you sow in sorrow, you will doubtless reap in joy. Hear your Lord saying, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Above all, hear him saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee. Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." What more can you desire? Jesus always with you—can you then ever indulge distress? Jesus always with you—can you then ever want a counsellor? Jesus always with you—can you then ever despair of final conquest? He who laid down his life for you, ever attentive to your welfare—no moment passing in which he is absent; no moment coming when he shall leave you, or his helping hand be far away. O rejoice in these promises! they are worth more than all the world.

§ 2. Let the consideration of *what the Savior is*, fill your soul with comfort. There is nothing in him to render him an object of dread to the suppliant at his feet. When the Apostle John saw his glory, beheld "his countenance as the sun shining in his strength," and "his eyes as a flame of fire," while he heard "his voice as the sound of many waters," he fell as dead at his Redeemer's feet; but Jesus said, "Fear not; I am the First and the Last: I am he that liveth and was dead." Though he appeared in such tremendous majesty, his humble follower had no cause for fear; and he still remembered what he had borne for man. Doubtless the same compassion still dwells in his breast. The flight of a few short years changes man; but the revolution of eternal ages will not change the compassionate Son of God. Think what tenderness he displayed, in a thousand forms, during his short so-

journ below. His business was to save. His office, to heal the broken-hearted. Imperfect friends and bitter foes received the tokens of his tender compassion. Behold the Savior in his intercourse with friends. Sympathizing with them in their sorrows, he wept at the grave of Lazarus. He bore with the dullness and errors of his disciples; and though he corrected their faults, treated them with one unvarying flow of kindness. When they, who should have watched with him in his agony, slept, instead of severely reproving them, he tenderly excused their fault, and said, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." When Peter denied him, and afterwards repented, he still owned him as a brother, and said, when sending a message to him and the other disciples, that had so lately been fugitives in the hour of his sorrow, "Go, tell MY BRETHREN that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me." When Thomas, after his resurrection, said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe," he gratified his unreasonable scruples; and said to Thomas, "Be not faithless, but believing." Even when he severely rebuked the dreadful lukewarmness of his professed friends at Laodicea, he did not conclude the solemn warning without expressing affection for them. "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent." To the sons and daughters of affliction, who sought his aid, he ever showed tenderness and love. The centurion besought him to heal his servant, and Jesus said, "I will come and heal him." Jairus, worshiping him, said, "My daughter is even now dead; but come, and lay thy hands on her, and

she shall live." Attentive to the cry of sorrow, Jesus arose and went. The leper said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Jesus answered, "I will; be thou clean." Blind Bartimeus cried, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." The disciples, less compassionate than their Lord, rebuked the importunate sufferer; but Jesus said unto him, "Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee." The widow of Canaan implored his help for her afflicted daughter. At first he seemed to hesitate; but only hesitated to prove her faith; and then said to her, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Often unsolicited he bestowed his aid. Thus to him, who lay by the pool of Bethesda, he said, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." When he met the widow who mourned the loss of her only son, he said, "Weep not;" and with a voice powerful as that which shall at length awaken all the dead, he said to the lamented object of her affection, that lay stretched lifeless on the bier, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." Even the poor guilty adulteress, that was conveyed into his presence, experienced his mercy. When Jesus said to her, "Hath no man condemned thee?" and she said, "No man, Lord;" he said, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." The tenderness of Jesus was strongly displayed even to his bitterest foes. He wept over impenitent Jerusalem; shed tears at the misery of those who were about to shed his blood. He prayed for his murderers, and desired their life who wrought his death; their happiness who loaded him with wo. Not in an hour of cool reflection, before or after his dreadful sorrows, but in the midst of those sufferings, he

prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." And after his resurrection, breathing forth the same unconquered tenderness, he directed the tidings of mercy to be proclaimed first to his murderers; and commanded his apostles to begin publishing forgiveness at Jerusalem. The tenderness thus displayed in his conduct is represented as essential to his character. While, as a Shepherd, he feeds all his flock, he shows peculiar compassion to the weak. It is said, "He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom! and shall gently lead those that are with young." How safe is the lamb on the shepherd's arm! or folded within the shepherd's bosom! How happy their lot whom Jesus gently leads in security and comfort on to heaven, the fold where all his flock will meet! "The bruised reed he will not break, and the smoking flax he will not quench." Weak as a reed, might be a proverb for weakness: but a bruised reed is still weaker: yet those, who are thus weak, will he not reject, but support: and where grace is like a little spark, he will not despise or quench that spark; but will fan it to a flame.

§ 3. All the tenderness the Savior ever displayed still governs in his breast. He is not less compassionate because removed to his eternal throne; nor less interested in the welfare of his flock, because he has left the wilderness where they sojourn. In the most expressive language he represented his interest in their happiness, his feeling for them, when, stopping Saul in his persecuting career, he said, "Saul, Saul! why persecutest thou ME?" Thee, Lord! were not thy sorrows ended; wast thou not far above the reach of his mighty malice and his cruel hand! Thou wast; but still didst say,

"Why persecutest thou ME?" Thy flock was persecuted; and injury done to them, was done to thee. The head in heaven felt with the members suffering upon earth.

Conformably with this representation, it is elsewhere declared, that he nourisheth and cherisheth the church. "For we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones." How gracious a representation! Man naturally feels interested in the welfare of his body; and anxious to supply it with food, to shield it from harm, to guard it from pain, and to minister to its comfort and welfare. This care to nourish and cherish the body, is declared to be like that care which the Lord Jesus entertains to nourish and cherish his flock, and to be but an imitation of his care. With more than the fondness of a parent bird fostering her young; with more than the tenderness of a nurse cherishing her infant charge; with more than the affection of a mother fondling her tender offspring; with a love powerful as that self-love which prompts man to feel for his own body, does the Lord Jesus feel for his church; and tend, and watch, and cherish, and feed, and bless his flock.

Think of him, whose love fills heaven with happiness; whose dying sorrows have procured immortal life for countless multitudes; whose compassion shines like the noon-day sun, but has no setting beam; and can you distrust such tenderness, or droop beneath the noon-day warmth of such compassion? Is he so kind, why do you not rejoice incessantly in him? Surely when you droop in sadness, he might say, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? didst thou find in thy Redeemer aught to occasion thy fears? Dost thou see any want of love in him;

any want of richness in his grace, or of freeness in his promises?" O look more to him for peace! Say of this compassionate Jesus, He is God my Savior; of this tender yet Almighty Shepherd, He is my Shepherd; and you may add, "I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

§ 4. The disciples of Jesus are also taught to view him as their *intercessor;* and hence should flow into their souls that "peace which passeth all understanding." The Most High has not revealed the mode of the Savior's intercession for his flock; but has fully asserted its reality. Christ "is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." "We have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

To intercede, is to present petitions in behalf of another. To act as an advocate, is to plead another's cause, and attend to his interests. This the Lord Jesus Christ is declared to do for his disciples. He intercedes in their behalf; he pleads as their advocate; and so prevalent is his intercession, and of such immense moment in advancing their salvation, that on his ever living to intercede, is grounded his ability for ever to save; and because he acts as their High Priest in heaven, his

disciples are exhorted to go boldly to the throne of grace, and to hold their profession fast.

Look to Jesus as your advocate. What efficacy must his intercession impart to the sighs and lispings of his weakest follower! Think of him as the Son of God, the brightness of his Father's glory: and can he plead your cause in vain? or can it fail when trusted in his hands? His intercession has availed for multitudes, which no man can number. Go then, O go to him: He loved thee as angels cannot love, and feels for thee as angels cannot feel. They know not what it is to sigh, to sorrow, and to weep: but he, for thee, has felt all this. They know not what it is to hunger and thirst, to be weary and faint, to be persecuted and scorned, to pray in sadness and to die in wo; but he, who is thy intercessor, knows all this; for he has felt it all. And since he "himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." Tell him of thy sorrows—he once had sorrow. Tell him of thy enemies—he once had enemies. Unfold to him all the secret sadness of thy heart—he once felt the bitterness of wo. When weak, ask his grace to strengthen thee; when troubled, implore his smile to cheer; when fallen, beg his strength to raise thee. In darkness look to him; and when thy poor defective prayers are but the moanings of a broken heart, still look to him, who lives to plead thy cause. Solace thy soul, by thinking what an intercessor thou hast—an intercessor for ever the same. Let faith display him to thee as exalted in eternal day; yet think that among the praises of the blest he hears the lispings of thy feeble voice. He is thy advocate with his Father and thy Father. Thou mayst go to

him and say, Blessed Jesus! angels praise and saints adore thee. They are as holy as they are happy; but I, thy poor disciple, have many sorrows, and all I do deserves thy frown. So much unbelief mingles with my faith; so much coldness with my love; so much languor with my hope; so much imperfection with all my services; so many wandering imaginations even with my most solemn prayers; that if thou dost not help me I must sink, and die. If thou dost not plead for me, I must give up every hope; but thou wilt plead for me. Thou art my intercessor, and in thee let me find my everlasting all; and cold as is this heart, does it not wish, and pray, and long to love thee? and weak as is this faith, does it not fix upon thee, and still turn to thee? and dim as is this hope, yet thou knowest this glimmering, trembling hope would not fix on any thing but thee; nor would I be without this hope for all the works thy hands have made. But let this hope brighten; and plead thou for me; and take into thy care my everlasting concern; and let me rejoice in thee, as my advocate and eternal friend, and then thy will be done for every thing besides!

§ 5. The Christian is represented as *the peculiar property* of Christ. "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's;" and his through the purchase of his blood, "bought with a price" inestimable. The thought is delightful—"We are the Lord's." What more can the soul desire to secure its happiness? Whether we live, we are the Lord's—then all his dealings must be meant in mercy, and all must end in good. Whether we die, we are the Lord's—then all must be well in the world unseen.

The Christian may say, "I know not where heaven is; but Jesus knows, and I am his. When soul and body part, my spirit will be a stranger to the wondrous path that conducts the righteous to the presence of their God; but Jesus knows the way, and I am his. Whatever scenes may open on my view, how solemn soever the realities that await me when I enter eternity, this one thing assures me that all must be right—"Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." "We are the Lord's"—delightful words—sweet as the harmony of heaven. A thousand and a thousand times might the charming declaration be repeated, and yet not all its power be felt, nor all its value comprehended. We are the Lord's—then welcome life! that we may live to him; and welcome death! that we may go to him; welcome the services of time! they are what he requires; and welcome the rest of eternity! it is what he prepares. Welcome the christian warfare! being his makes victory certain. Welcome the battle! being his secures the crown. Welcome health or weakness, life or death, time or eternity, earth or heaven! Let us but hear, "We are the Lord's," and each shall be welcome—all shall be welcome.

§ 6. The Lord Jesus Christ is also declared to be the *friend and brother* of his flock. He owns the endearing appellations. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." How wonderful the love which applies such endearing names to those who were once so far from God and holiness! How boundless the blessedness of having in Immanuel a brother and a friend! All that is valuable in earthly friendships and infinitely more, is comprehended in his. The tenderest friendships of earth are but a mutual tribute of

affection, where each receives, and each gives. Your friends love you because you love them, and your love to them is strengthened by their love to you; but O how different is his friendship who died for you when you were his enemy! He is an almighty friend. The dearest relatives below are frail as the flower of the field; but he is liable to no decay. When they have a willing heart they often have a feeble hand; and fervent prayers and unavailing pity is frequently all the relief that they can administer to those they love the best. But his means are not thus limited. When they can only mingle sorrows with our sorrows, he can drive those sorrows away. He can cheer when they can only weep. He can infuse into the heart the peace which passeth all understanding, and can so strengthen the faith of his disciples, in invisible and eternal things, that they may sometimes seem almost the objects of sight, instead of belief; and by such seasons of delightful intercourse with heaven, he can fill their souls with strong consolation. All the treasures of wisdom too are his. When perplexity and distress beset his friends, and earthly counselors fail, or stand confounded, he will guide those who look to him for wisdom, in the right way, to a city of habitation. Even with respect to temporal concerns, he can suggest a thought, or fix on the heart an impression, which shall influence all the future life, and extend its influence to eternity itself. His friendship is unchangeable; having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them to the end. Earthly friends are often fickle and mutable; but Jesus Christ "is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." No enemies can lessen his love to the beloved flock; no slanderer pour his venom into the Redeemer's ear. His

friendship endures the same through the short summer of prosperity and the dark winter of adversity; and it endures for ever. When other friends are most faithful and affectionate, dear as the light that visits our eyes, or as the blood that warms our hearts, such is this world, that they often may be absent when wanted most. Distance may deprive us of their sympathy and affection when these are most desirable; but this heavenly friend is ever near. He said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." If Jesus is our friend, we have one friend ever at hand to hear the faintest whisper that solicits his aid. His friendship is eternal too, and this is the crown of all the rest. It lasts for eternity. Blessed eternity! It is eternity that will infuse the most rapturous delight into the triumphant believer's overflowing cup of happiness. It is eternity that will form the brightest ray in the triumphant believer's far more exceeding weight of heavenly glory: and it is eternity that renders the friendship of Jesus Christ so immense a blessing, that its worth might be for ever telling, yet for ever untold. Our most beloved friends must die; and we must die; and the fondest earthly connections must shortly be dissolved. To mourn for the death of those we hold most dear, or to have them mourn on account of ours, is what we all are doomed to here. "The loss of friends is the sad tribute, I had almost said the sad equivalent, that in these regions of death we must pay for loving and being beloved;" but death shall never terminate the friendship of Jesus with his humble flock. That sweet, that awful word, eternity, makes him ours for ever. The sun which

shines on the dwellings where we live with our beloved friends below; the solid earth on which we tread with them; the stars that shine on our evening walks in their company; these, like us, are frail; and lasting as they seem, must come to nothing; but the friendship of Jesus Christ is stronger and more lasting than they. It will flourish in those new heavens wherein dwelleth righteousness. Beyond the gulf of death it will diffuse immortal good, through ages more numerous than the drops of summer rain and the flakes of winter snow, from the creation to this day. The spirits of the just made perfect, the goodly company of the redeemed can witness that Jesus Christ is an eternal friend. Death has long ago taken away their worldly possessions, their health, their strength, their time; but not their Redeemer; that perfect and most blessed friend, with whom they shall abide to everlasting ages.

§ 7. Dear is the friendship of Jesus Christ; blessed is it to be his friend; but his Gospel opens a richer treasury of happiness. It represents him as assuming a still dearer name than that of friend. He is the brother of his flock. When he rose from the grave, he said, "Go tell my BRETHREN that they go into Galilee Go to my BRETHREN, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God." "He is not ashamed to call them BRETHREN." As his brethren they are beloved; but there is a remarkable passage, in which he expresses for them an affection stronger than that of a brother. He said, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." His mean-

ing evidently was, that every one who does his Father's will, becomes united to himself in the closest relation; in one so close as singly to obtain as much of his affection as a mother, and sister, and brother could share among them.

§ 8. How honorable, how delightful, such a union with the Son of God! How wonderful the compassion and grace of the holy Jesus, in bringing into so sacred a connection those who were once the heirs of sin, and wrath, and death! What raptures should fire the soul at the thought of such a connection! That Jesus, who gave angels and archangels their seats in glory, is our friend, our brother, and even more than a brother. Their exalted nature he never wore. Never did he deign to be called their brother, but he has become ours. Could we see a host of happy angels, what an honor should we deem it to be able to say to them, Your Lord is our brother; he has himself acknowledged the relation. O! my fellow pilgrim, rejoice in thinking that he has. He has lived in this land of darkness, this field of death, this vale of pollution, and now in heaven owns as his brethren all that truly love his name. In this low world of sin, misery, and death, the divine Jesus seeks friends and brethren that will be eternally dear to his heart. Creator, Redeemer, Friend, and Brother, all unite in him. O, truths astonishing, yet delightful! truths surpassing wonder, yet full of consolation! truths, that, had they not come from heaven, it would have been sin to credit, and which it is now sin to disbelieve! O what is mortal praise, or mortal love, when offered to that Savior whose condescending goodness is so vast! Could we offer the praise of angels—praises like those which angels offer

would be languid, poor, and cold. Lord, what is ransomed man! Man, that, when washed in thy blood, claims thee as a brother, thou Ruler of the skies! thou Lord of heaven! Happy they who enjoy this sacred connection with the adorable Son of God! This, my brother, or my sister, is our highest honor. Ah, monarchs! may the followers of the Lamb exclaim, keep your crowns, wear your vain titles, govern your wide empires, let us but reign in the presence of Jesus, and in heaven itself be known as the blood-bought kindred of the Son of God!

§ 9. Blessings immense and countless, for time and eternity, flow from such a union. If this enriches you, and peace and comfort should be your lot, you may placidly look forward to a world, where these shall be enjoyed in higher perfection through eternal days. If sorrow embitter your way, and cloud your sky, you may rejoice in your hasty advances to that state, where the love of Jesus shall banish every grief. The friendship and love of this adorable Savior and brother will be the stay of his friends, when rocks crumble to dust, and mountains tremble to their base; when the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and when the fashion of the world, and the world itself, have passed away. Sweet will it be to smile amidst that last storm, and sweet indeed then to enjoy the brotherly love of a divine Savior.

It is said, that on one occasion a poor aged Christian was observed making her scanty meal on bread and water, but expressing the warm gratitude of her heart, because the Savior was hers. "All this," said she, "and Christ too." Rich are the poorest that have such a friend: poor are the richest that have not. It is

related, that a gentleman one day took an acquaintance on the leads of his house, to show him the extent of his possessions. "There," said he, waving his hand about, "that is my estate." Then pointing to a great distance on one side, "Do you see that farm? That is mine." Then pointing to the other side, "Do you see that house? That also belongs to me." His friend said, "Do you see that little village yonder? There lives a poor woman in that village who can say more than all this." "What can she say?" "She can say, Christ is mine! And can you say, Christ is mine? Then indeed you should rejoice in the Lord always." O that others would seek the treasures of which grace has made you an heir! Whatever be your lot, you should be happy. You are so now, and will be so to everlasting years. Let sickness come, and blast your youthful days; let paleness overspread your countenance, and the last enemy be stopping the blood at your heart; yet still in Christ you will be happy; happier infinitely in pain, and death, with a Savior, than you could be without him, though health, and life, and the riches of kingdoms were your portion. Think more how many blessings are centered in your Savior; and rejoicing in your Lord, pursue your way to his presence and abode.

§ 10. Though the chief work of the Lord Jesus is to secure the happiness of his disciples when this momentary scene is passed away, yet he kindly desires their comfort while it lasts. It is true, to him who views eternity, our few hasty years must appear no longer than a moment: yet this life, in his sight, like a moment, a sigh, or a nothing, must have its peace and comfort, and have it too from him. He spoke that

divinely gracious discourse, recorded in the fourteenth and two following chapters of the Gospel of John, that he might promote the temporal comfort, as well as the spiritual welfare of his disciples. "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." Precious words! We may hear this gracious Savior saying in them, Look to me, and though you should have little peace besides, in me ye may have peace. In that troubled world you shall have tribulations; in me a refuge against them all; in me ye shall have peace. In that hostile world hatred and persecution may befall you; in me you have a shelter from every storm, a support in every sorrow; in me ye shall have peace. In that transient world you may expect languor and disease, changing comforts, dying pleasures, and piercing griefs; but through life, through death, on earth, in heaven, in me ye shall have unchanging comfort, in me ye may have peace. To promote this peace, the Lord Jesus has given many gracious promises. O exercise faith in them! Consider they are as firm, and as sure, and as precious, as if you heard the Lord Jesus speaking them to you. When pensive and alone, meditating on the world to come, think you see your Savior approach, and hear him say, "Let not your heart be troubled. In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you." If oppressed by the malignity of men, go from their company, "enter into thy closet, and shut thy door;" there try to realize the presence of your Lord, and hear him saying, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world

hateth you." If encountering sorrow and pain, hear him saying, "Ye now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." When wandering among the tombs, thinking of dear departed friends, whom you must meet no more on earth, and thinking how soon the grave must be your home, as it now is theirs, then hearken to the sweet promises of Jesus: "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." "I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am ye may be also." O would he, who once sojourned below, again descend and utter these and other heart-reviving words, where, with your Savior speaking by your side, would be the darts of affliction or the sting of death? and where would be the victory of the grave? If the Lord had been pointing you to a dwelling in the heavens, could you cease to rejoice in the prospect of that happier land? Would you not weep as though you wept not, and rejoice as though you rejoiced not; and often think, It was there, beyond these lower skies, that he taught me to expect my endless home? Or had he been warning you to expect hatred or affliction; yet adding that you were his friend, and that you should soon be glorified with him, could you mourn much at human hatred, or repine at earthly sorrows? Would you not rather think, My best, my most unalterable friend, has entered within the veil, and I am following apace; welcome then trials, if by trials he will train me for his own abode? Jesus will not come from heaven to converse with you; he will not visibly commune with you; he will not sit with you in the house of mourning, or walk with you among the tombs; yet he is as truly with you, as if he were thus to appear. By day, by

night, when you walk, or rest, or labor, or sleep, your Lord is with you; and his promises are as firm as if you heard them from his lips, or as if an angel, commissioned by him, brought them to you from his heavenly throne.

§ 11. If grace has made this Savior and these promises yours, how many blessings do you possess! It is delightful now, with humble, yet cheerful confidence, to call Christ ours; yet if this confidence now diffuses through the soul a peace that passeth understanding, what is the rapture it will impart when he shall appear in the clouds of heaven! Then, when the sufferer of Calvary descends, attended by all the angelic hosts, and comes as the "worthy Judge eternal;" when the sneers of infidelity are hushed in eternal silence; when his followers no longer appear a despised, afflicted, persecuted train, but, led by him, ascend to heavenly thrones; then, when the confusion of despairing sinners, trembling before his awful bar, exceeds, in terrible dismay, all that any heart can conceive, as much as eternal ruin is worse than temporal wo—then, what will be the joy of belonging to him! And when all these solemnities are passed, and vast unbounded eternity stretches in infinite prospect before the triumphant soul—then, what will it be to belong to Jesus! Here imagination must stop; none can conceive the holy overwhelming rapture.

§ 12. Among the innumerable privileges which the children of God enjoy, the Scriptures expressly mention the ministering care of holy *angels*. The word of God represents them as strong in power, great in glory, and favored with near access to the throne of God. It declares, that at times they are employed by their

heavenly Father on commissions of judgment; but that their more frequent and delightful office is to minister to the heirs of salvation. So extensively are these countless multitudes thus employed, that the Scriptures say, "Are they not ALL ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?" They are employed in protecting and upholding the children of God. They minister to them through the fleeting span of life; and conduct to rest the triumphant spirit, when life's last conflict ends. How happy they who have such invisible but kind attendants! How rich the Savior's love, that employs these glorious spirits to minister to the welfare of his feeble flock! How warm should be the gratitude, how fervent the love, how devout the holiness, of that feeble flock!

Thus animated by your Redeemer's love, and blest in his care, pursue your pilgrimage to heaven. When you contemplate his love, what is all you can render to him, but like the dust of the balance weighed against the world? When you stretch your views to eternal life, what is mortal life but the twinkling of an eye? And what the sorrows of time but like a drop of grief compared with an ocean of delight?

§ 13. A principal source of happiness to the followers of the Lamb, is found in their *connection with the great and blessed God*, and in what he is to them.

Come, solace thy soul by viewing God, thy God, arrayed in all his mild attractive glories. He is "the God of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory.' "The God of all grace!" Precious words! What more comprehensive, what more kind, can a

wounded soul, a contrite heart, desire! The God of all grace! How vast must be the treasures of his compassion! how boundless the riches of his love! Nor less boundless his strange and amazing condescension. "He hath called us to his eternal glory by Jesus Christ." Where now rise the heights of his love? where sink its depths? God, as the God of all grace, hath called us, the children of sin and wo to glory—to eternal glory—and O, more amazing still, to his eternal glory. What is there in the character of so good, so compassionate, though so great a God, that should excite one fear in an humble and contrite heart? In a not less attractive light is this great and holy God displayed, when his word says, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." How emphatic is this language! Who can ever unfold the wonders of grace and goodness it reveals? God is not only merciful, but "rich in mercy;" not merely kind to man, when penitent and pardoned, but "loving with great love" poor perishing man, "even when dead in trespasses and sins." Amazing grace! what grateful offerings does it not deserve! what fervent love and cheerful confidence should it infuse in every humble heart! The Lord Jesus Christ, in whom dwelt all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, displayed his Father's tenderness in the most impressive and gladdening manner, when he said to Philip, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." Whatever else the divine Savior intended to express by these words, it is evident they must include the idea

that tenderness, compassion and love, like what dwelt in him, dwell in the eternal Father. When Jesus abode below, and appeared kind to every mourner, gracious to every suppliant, and full of melting love and tender pity for all that sought his aid, what humble, penitent, or downcast believer could have dreaded him? But he says, he that hath seen me hath seen the Father. Blessed declaration! It is as if he had said, "His compassion is like mine; his tenderness as vast; his love as boundless; his goodness as great." Fear not then, my fellow pilgrim; think what Jesus was, and think, thy God is like him. When God represents his own kind condescension and compassion, he says, "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Ah, gracious condescension! What more than to be revived by God, and cheered by his presence, can an humble heart desire? How good is God, who thus encourages your trust in him! How should his immeasurable grace, and rich compassion, drive fear, and doubt, and distress away!

§ 14. Art thou, my brother or sister, indeed a follower of the Lamb? Then God is more than all this to thee, thy Father, Friend and Portion. "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that

we are dust." With what peace should these gracious declarations fill the soul. God is a Father—a Father in heaven—a Father who knows the frame of his children. He sees its weakness; he perceives the dangers to which he is exposed; the sorrows to which it gives birth; and not only knows, "but remembers" that we are dust. Formed from the dust, man fades like a flower, perishing before a scorching blast. "His days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth; for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him." Charming contrast! the frailty and vanity of man render the love of God more glorious. Man is for a moment; but the love of God for ever. Mortal man, in his best estate on earth, is like a withering flower; but the love of God to ransomed man never fades, it endures and shines for ever and ever.

God is the Friend, and Father, and Portion of those who belong to the holy Jesus. What nobler happiness can an immortal being require? The humble disciple of the Savior may exclaim with the Psalmist, "Thou art my portion, O Lord." "Thou art my God, and I will praise thee; thou art my God, I will exalt thee." The followers of the world have their possessions; riches, honors, profits, pleasure; these are their treasure; but thou, the Lord of heaven and earth, art mine. Thou art my God, my Father, and Friend. Thou, whom angels venerate, and devils dread; whose smile is life, whose frown is death—thou art my God. Thou, whose possessions are heaven and earth—whose dwelling-place is eternity—whose favor is more to me

than all the world—thou art my God. Thou art my Father too—mine in life—amidst its bustling, changing, vexing scenes, thou art my God. In pain and in ease, in prosperity and adversity, in sickness or in health, thou art my God and Father; and thou wilt be mine in death; and then, in vast eternity, thou wilt be for ever mine.

§ 15. Such an interest as this in the favor and love of God, is the greatest blessing an immortal creature can enjoy. None can conceive how much is contained in those gracious words, Friend and Father, when the great and blessed God is he to whom they are applied. Were the high and low, the rich and poor, of every nation under heaven, uniting to minister to our comfort, all would be far outdone by the single blessing—God our friend. Were it possible for us to call down legions of angels from their starry thrones, to surround us with ceaseless care, to wait our commands, to minister to our welfare, or fetch us supplies of happiness from unseen worlds—all would be outdone, far outdone by this single blessing, God our friend. Suppose that you were endowed with everlasting strength, and that the irresistible power and infinite wisdom of the great Almighty were bestowed upon you, whom could you then fear? what enemies could excite the smallest alarm in your peaceful breast? And what could you want, when possessed of might sufficient in a moment to call men, angels, or a world into being? Now, though we are crushed before the moth, and perish like a leaf, yet if God be our friend, we have in some sense omnipotence our own. The eternal God is the refuge of his people; and this almighty power and infinite wisdom are engaged, under the direction of infinite love

in their behalf. How glorious are his works! how much more glorious himself! When we survey the spacious earth, the wide-spread heavens, the glowing sun, the silent sky glittering with ten thousand stars, how lofty should be our thoughts of him who formed them all! and O, how high our view of the blessedness of having God our Friend and Father! Though once he pronounced those good, the time draws nigh when he shall delight in them no more; but the treasures of this invaluable blessing will never be exhausted. Stupendous God! though heaven is thy throne, and eternity thy dwelling-place, the dust that lies at thy feet, the penitent that bows at thy footstool, claims thee for his Father, his everlasting Father: and thou wilt own the claim: and when the grandeur of this world is all forgotten; when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and this creation die, thy love will bless eternity, and last unchanged through all its ample round.

The love of God insures every other blessing; for he can do all you want, and more than all you wish. The love of earthly friends, when most fervent, is feeble love. Little is the most, and weak the best, that they can do. When pain and sickness cloud your days, they cannot bid disease depart and health return; but he can; or else he can make pain better than ease, and sickness a greater good than health. If sin and sorrow oppress your soul, no earthly friends can take the load of guilt away; nor can they comfort the troubled conscience, mourning for years of sin and folly; but this almighty Father can fill the broken heart with heavenly peace: he can say, Be of good comfort; thy sins are forgiven thee. He can forgive all the guilt that ren-

bers judgment terrible, and fill your soul with peace so sweet, and hope so strong as to quell every fear and silence every doubt. And all you want besides he can bestow. He can enrich you with plenty, or make loss and poverty better blessings than prosperity and wealth. He can fill your heart with love, and help you to believe, confide, rejoice. And when the solemn hour arlives in which you must die, even in that momentous hour he has power to give all your departing soul will need. Then earthly friends, the dearest and the best, can only mourn. They cannot drive your fears away; nor can they open the portals of heaven, and say, Come in, thou blessed. But God, your kind heavenly Father, can do more than this: he can make death better than life, and render your last your happiest hour. He can banish every gloomy fear, and make death itself wear a smile, and seem the messenger of heavenly love come to summon you to the abodes of glory. He can gladden with immortal hopes your dying moments, and give you an abundant entrance into his eternal kingdom.

§ 16. Perhaps the scenes through which God leads you are scenes of trial; yet consider, whatever be the immediate source of affliction, that *trials come from God.* Even when wicked men are the authors of his sufferings, the Christian may say, "They are the sword, the hand is thine." That afflictions come from God, is the declaration of his word. "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then

are ye bastards, and not sons." As afflictions thus proceed from God, so they are declared to be the effect of his love. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent." "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

If any escape affliction, the children of God are not of that number. All whose holy example is displayed in the sacred Scriptures, and whose piety shone with the brightest lustre, passed along a chequered path to heaven. Job and Joseph, and the patriarchs, Elijah and Daniel, and the prophets, Paul and the apostles, were trained for glory and happiness in scenes of earthly trial. Even Jesus was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Yet in the darkest day of trouble many are the sources of Christian consolation. Is God leading you through the fire, or the waters of affliction? think of the gracious design he has in view. He chastens "for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness." He afflicts you to ripen your soul for that happier land, where no affliction is ever felt. He sinks you on earth that you may rise in heaven; and makes you sad for a moment here that he may make you happier through eternity there. God has various ends to accomplish in the afflictions of his children. Sometimes he afflicts them to humble and to purify their souls. To keep him humble, Paul was afflicted; and Job said, "When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold; and his word declares, "Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." At other times the Father of mercies designs to brighten

their graces, to strengthen their faith and patience. Hence his word says, "The trying of your faith worketh patience." "Now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Sometimes God, by affliction, would lead the affections of his children upwards to a better world, while he enables them to declare, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." At other times, by chastening them, he teaches them to exercise resignation and submission. "Tribulation worketh patience." On some occasions afflictions are employed to restore wanderers to the path of peace. The Psalmist said, "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I have kept thy word." At others, afflictions make them feel more sensibly the vanity of all below, and endear their God and Savior to them. Then the language of the Psalmist expresses the feelings of the humble, happy soul. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart fail: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

§ 17. While such are God's gracious designs in the chastisements his hand inflicts, the Christian has reason to rejoice, even in afflictions. God promises to support his suffering family, and teaches them to contemplate a day when all their afflictions end. All their

trials are under his control, are sent in mercy, and will end in good. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." While they last, he promises to his children divine support. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." I, even I, am he that comforteth you." "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." How precious are these promises! What more can be desired than the support and presence of our God!

Does affliction cloud your sky? do sorrows overwhelm your sinking spirits? yet forget not that God is kind. "He careth for you." Gracious declaration! what words can be more expressive of his tender interest in your happiness? "He careth for you." Not only gives you blessings, but *cares* for your welfare· makes your little interests his concern. Surely all must be right that so gracious a Friend appoints! all must tend to good that so kind a Father ordains! "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Did he thus give his best Beloved for you, and can you think that he will refuse [illegible]u any real good? Are you oppressed with sickness and pain? God could give you health: to give you health would be a little thing compared with giving you Christ.

Surely if he does not give you health, the reason must be, he sees it best to appoint you sickness. Are you poor? God could give you wealth. He gave you Christ; and if he keeps you poor, the cause must be, that poverty is best for you. Were riches best, he who gave Christ would give you riches. Whatever fancied good you may desire, you may argue, If this were real good, God would give it me. He who gave Christ, that great and precious boon, would not refuse this trifling gift, if this would prove a blessing to me. A suffering Christian, after a night of pain, observed, "It has been a night of great pain, but it was a night appointed me by Jesus Christ, and sure it must be a good one that he appoints." Thus reason respecting your heavenly Father's conduct. Doubt not his love, who gave a Savior. Depend on his interest in your happiness through the few moments of time, who sent his only begotten Son into the world, to make you happy to eternity.

§ 18. The trials of life will *soon conclude.* Vain is all below the sun, except the blessings of your heavenly Father's love. The pleasures of this world pass away. The wisdom of this world is fading and dying. The head that has often ached in acquiring science, soon lies down in the dust, and forgets its vaunted knowledge. Expect not therefore living comforts in a dying world. Your trials too are short, for eternity is near. In the light of eternity, how insignificant will those short trials seem! Time and sorrow are hastening by, eternity and bliss are approaching; and when you wake amidst eternal things, how little will seem what you enjoyed or suffered here. What will the loss of property, or the loss of reputation, signify then! When, ten minutes after death, you look back on this world,

how vain a dream will all the scenes of life appear! What poor trifles will its pleasures seem! what dying things its friendships! what little griefs its heaviest woes! And when ten thousand ages have fled away, and you look back on what now seems like a sea of trouble, that ocean of affliction will be like the drop of a bucket. Formidable as it once seemed, it will then appear like nothingness itself. Let the thought of eternity mingle with the trials of time; and its weightiest trials will be felt "as light affliction which is but for a moment." And while those momentary trials continue, think whither they hasten you. Every day of affliction hastens the child of God to the haven of eternal peace. As the tossing of a tempest may hurry a shattered ship sooner to its harbor than the fairest wind that blows; so the rough storm of worldly sorrow, as well as the peaceful gale, and perhaps more hastily, may urge the Christian to the port where every storm shall cease. Keep that peaceful port in view. Faith will soon be lost in sight; hope make way for certainty; time and its shadows be perhaps almost forgotten amidst the glories of eternity. The dark night of life will shortly close; affliction's last tempest be hushed in peace; and the bright morning of eternal day open on the tranquil and enraptured soul. Then farewell to chastisement, to grief and pain.

§ 19. Happy are they who enjoy the love and care of a gracious Savior, and a heavenly Father! Happy amidst the scenes of time, and happier when quitting them for ever! Their great work is done, their best interests are secure. Should even sudden death hurry them from health and vigor to the cold tomb, yet they are blessed, whose home is in the skies, whose Father

is in heaven. When life declines, glory will dawn; and the moment that bears them hence will bear them home.

Come, my fellow-pilgrim, let us contemplate that home. How fair is the prospect! how bright the eternal day! how sweet the peace the hope of that eternal day imparts! The Christian is blessed, who, looking beyond the shadows of time, can exclaim, "As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness." "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." Though my path may be rough and thorny, thou shalt guide me, and, blessed hope! thou wilt receive me—even me, to glory. The world have their fading satisfactions and dying pleasures, which must vanish when their poor possessors lie down to die; but thou art my Father and my God, and when my flesh and heart fail, wilt be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. For ever! For ever! How gladsome is the prospect of peace and bliss, where peace and bliss must endure for ever! And is this your animating hope? Glorious hope! Compared with this the wealth of worlds is poverty. Perhaps your thoughts delighted rove over those scenes of never-fading bliss; but death still appears terrible. The dark valley seems so dark, that you dread descending into it, though it is the passage to eternal day.

§ 20. Think then of Jesus's power to save, and to cheer even the solemn hour of dissolution with a hope so full of immortality that death shall be swallowed up in victory. He can make pain, sickness and death, the way of comfort, the way of life. Not only apostles and martyrs, but myriads unknown to the busy world,

cheered by his presence, have passed the gulf of death in peace. I have known one who said, "Blessed be the Lord! the sting of death is gone. I feel that the fear of death is taken away. I wish for death. I think every day, when it is night, I am a day nearer my blessed home." I have heard another humble disciple of the Savior say, "The blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin, and cleansed me. I hope and trust Jesus Christ is my all. He is my supporter and my all. The nearer I get to my journey's end, I hope the more comfort I find. The nearer I get, the more fear is gone." I have known a young follower of the holy Jesus, when about to quit this world, declare, that she would not on any account change places with her Christian friends; thinking her condition so much better than theirs because her course was nearer ending. "I am rejoiced," said she, "when I think myself worse. I never thought I should be so comfortable on a sick bed. I am very comfortable. The Lord is my support: I want no other. I know that religion is not a vain thing; I have found that it is not." I have heard another, when gospel consolation was mentioned to him, observe, "It makes a death-bed pleasant:" and heard the same humble, unlettered disciple declare, "I am fixed on Christ: he is all my dependence. I believe the Lord is waiting to receive me." These expressions, dropped from dying lips, were not uttered by apostles or martyrs; but were the testimony of plain and humble Christians to the support their gracious Lord imparted. How precious such support! Cheered by it, what is death? How its terrors dwindle into insignificance! Death thus cheered, is indeed the coming of the Savior to call his followers home The Lord Jesus Christ gave this view of death

"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." How pleasing a representation of that solemn event! Death but the coming of a Savior. Then what is it to die, but to lean a languishing head on his compassionate arm, and to commit a ransomed spirit to his faithful care? Could he personally appear to take his followers home, who that loves him would fear to die? Ah, could we look into the unseen world, and behold his dealings with his humble flock, what sacred peace and holy ecstacy would the view inspire! Then we might hear him say to ministering angels, "Go fetch my follower; let all her trials end; let disease set the captive free; let it dissolve the bonds of transient life; let the purchase of my blood ascend to me; and let my promise be fulfilled, Where I am shall ye be also." Yes, death, to the blood-bought family of God, is the coming of Jesus; and it is his presence that has enabled some to say, "Happy, happy;" and others to expire with, "Victory! Victory!" on their dying lips. One to breathe out her spirit, saying, "Now I will go to my God;" and another to declare, "My Savior has sent his messenger for me, and I wish to go to him."

My fellow-pilgrim, when you read of the supports that others have found, look to him who upheld their fainting heads, for your support in the last struggles of dissolving nature. Cleave to him, and he will not forget you in that awful hour; for he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

"Come now, be his in ev'ry part!
"Nor give him less than all your heart.
"And when the closing scenes prevail,

"When wealth, state, pleasure, all must fail,
"All that a foolish world admires,
"Or passion craves, or pride inspires;
"At that important hour of need,
"Jesus shall prove a friend indeed.
"His hands shall smooth thy dying bed,
"His arm sustain thy drooping head;
"And when the painful struggle's o'er,
"And that vain thing, the world, no more,
"He'll bear his humble friend away
"To rapture and eternal day."

Now raise your eyes, and look beyond the gloomy vale of death. The Scriptures teach you, that to the believer death is gain. Death is yours. That last enemy, through heavenly love, is constrained to become a friend. Death will end your labors and your dangers; will conclude your trials, and reward your toils; will bring the crown of victory, and satisfy your longing desires for immortality. Of those who sleep in Jesus it is said, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." "I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Of that abode it is said, "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." "And there shall be no

more curse: and there shall be no night there: and they shall reign for ever and ever." In the sweet prospect of this inheritance, a dying saint exclaimed, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Another, who loved his Master, said, "How thankful am I for death, as it is the passage through which I go to the Lord and Giver of eternal life. These afflictions are but for a moment, and then comes an eternal weight of glory."

§ 21. Come, *survey that happier land.* It is the blissful rest which God prepares for you, if you are his. It is the blest abode where saints and angels meet. It is the happy place where all the family of Jesus shall see him as he is, and in his presence spend eternal ages.

Think of that happy world as that which God prepares. There Jesus declares are many peaceful dwellings. He has said, "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you." Those happy mansions God, your gracious Father, for his family prepares. This sweet, this cheering fact, his own word declares. It is said of Abraham, "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and Maker is God." Of others eminent for piety it is said, "They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city." What must that abode be which a God of love provides for those he condescends to own! how rich must be the inheritance which God himself prepares! how im-

mense the love which leads him thus to take delight in the happiness of ransomed penitents!

In a passage, if possible, still more delightful, it is said by the Lord Jesus himself, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Here God appears the Father of the family that is bound for heaven; and a Father so interested in their happiness, that to give them a kingdom above is pleasure even to him. Gracious God! can it be that such is thy interest in the happiness of those poor penitents thy love has ransomed from eternal death! O what heights, and depths, and breadths, and lengths of love are thine! O what vileness is ours, if we do not love thee with all the grateful fervor of affectionate hearts!—Ah, let us repeat the charming words once more, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." And will he give that kingdom as the completion of his amazing designs of love? And is he pleased to give you the kingdom? Ah, what must be that heaven which such a God, which such a Father, gives, and delights in giving, to those he loves with an everlasting love! Surely we may exclaim, O vile ungrateful hearts, to love this heavenly Friend no more! O vain deluded minds, to see one attraction in any thing beneath the sun, while such a kingdom waits our coming!

That gracious God who thus blesses his humble friends, will bless them in the abode his love prepares with all the comforts of his presence. Of them, when fixed there, his word asserts, "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, nei-

ther thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

O, happy, happy they, who thus rest in the presence of their God! They have done with the dark services of time; and all they love, and all they wish, all that a vast eternity requires to make it one blest scene of unmingled joy, they find in God. O, happy end to life's short pilgrimage! O happy abode! Why does not every follower of the Lamb, with longing, ardent, restless desires, wait for that peaceful home?

§ 22. There too the disciple of Immanuel shall rest with him. That gracious friend has said, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor." "I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Happy state! There the declaration of his word will be fulfilled, "So shall we ever be with the Lord." Sweet is this prospect to them that love their Lord. To be where their Redeemer is, is all the anxious heart can crave, and all the rising soul can wish. While wandering through the wilderness of time, the Christian may feel that much which is strange and solemn must open on

the soul when starting forward into vast eternity; but to be where the Savior is, this is enough—this must be well.

"My knowledge of that state is small,
"The eye of faith is dim:'
"But 'tis enough that Christ knows all
"And I shall be with him."

Cheering prospect! The Christian may say, I would not wander on earth a weary pilgrim through eternal days; nor would I find my endless home in some remote province of my heavenly Father's kingdom. This would be banishment to me. The heaven I seek, must be the heaven where my Redeemer reigns. Not all his glowing works can bound the flight of my aspiring soul. It presses beyond them all, and seeks a rest more glorious than their brilliant fires, more lasting than their short duration. When my freed spirit takes its last farewell of earth, those golden lamps that glitter in the firmament shall not stop its rising flight. They are mean, compared with the mansions to which I aspire, those mansions where I may dwell with God. They are not my Redeemer's home, but to the world, that is, would I ascend. There, blessed Jesus! would my aspiring spirit fix, and there alone. There it can rest for ever. There it can love for ever. There it can praise for ever.—My fellow-pilgrim, is not this your hope? do you not join in saying, "My Savior, the soul thou hast redeemed presses on to thee; O receive it to thine home when its wandering pilgrimage on earth concludes?" It is a gladdening thought that he has promised to do this, and has, doubtless, to millions that once trod our earth, fulfilled the gracious

promise, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be;" and he will fulfill it to myriads more. Happy they! while we mourn, they rejoice; they rest while we labor; praise when we sigh; are secure when dangers threaten us. They hear no complaints; shed no tears; utter no groans. They are in the dwelling of their Lord. Blessed change! from the gloomy chamber of pain; from the cottage of poverty; from the society of feeble friends; or the labors of the shop, or the field, or the mill. There, absent from the body, they are present with the Lord.

§ 23. Perhaps you mourn the loss of some, once the beloved associates of your days, and fellow-pilgrims in the course to heaven. Come then, let us meditate on those few sweet words, "*Absent from the body and present with the Lord.*" These few sweet words describe their happiness; and if we follow the holy Jesus, tell us what shall soon be ours. When meditating on these words, we may confess that the weakness of our faith is in no way more apparent than by our languid desires after heavenly blessedness, and by our sorrow for those who leave time for eternity. We mourn when the blessed rejoice; and shed tears for those who will never shed them more. We lament a change, with which those on whom it has passed are infinitely satisfied. We mourn over their beloved remains, as if all we loved in them were there. But the better part has fled—the dark coffin does not receive it. The solemn grave will never confine it. The beloved *spirit*, which gives animation to the lifeless body, will never become an inhabitant of the tomb. "It is absent from the body, and present with the Lord." Blessed, thrice blessed,

change! more worthy for ourselves to be welcomed with eagerness than beheld with dislike! more worthy for those most dear to us to be reviewed with tears of joy and gratitude than remembered with regret.

"Absent from the body:" the feeble, languishing, disordered body. Ah, happy friends, beloved fugitives from these vain scenes, mourn for us; we need not mourn for you. The gloomy scenes which strike our imaginations with regret, disturb not yours. The dismal hearse, the narrow coffin, the gloomy grave, affect you not. Absent from the body, you are far from these. However bitterly we mourn at your funerals, you mourn not at your own. These sad scenes call from us increasing grief; from you not a single tear. By you they are not seen. Absent from the body, you are absent from them. As whatever passes in dwellings where we once abode *now* affects us not, so all the dark insignia of death, and all that passes round your beloved remains, disturbs not your tranquillity, nor lessens your delight.

"Absent from the body." O! blessed conquerors! then are you absent from its pains, and absent from its cares. Sickness and languors shall no more afflict you; for that feeble dwelling of languors and of pains lies far beneath you in the unconscious dust. Care and grief will no more intrude upon you. These are all forgotten, unless remembered to heighten your heavenly bliss.

"Absent from the body." In vain then, ye once dear, still dear objects, do we sorrow over you. You are not here—you are departed. You are not in the dust. There rests the forsaken dwelling; but you are not there. You are gone. The tomb then does not contain

our treasures. Ye are now saints on high, whom we lament below.

"Forgive, ye blest, the tributary tear
"That mourns your exit from a world like this:
"Forgive the wish that would have kept you here,
"And stayed your progress to the seats of bliss.

"No more confined to darksome realms of night,
"No more frail tenants pent in mortal clay:
"Now should we rather hail your glorious flight,
"And trace your progress to the realms of day."

Let *faith* then follow you *now*, and *we* will follow you *ere long*. Let faith trace your course to brighter worlds. It is true, you are "absent from the body;" but, O you are "present with the Lord." Though absent, you are not lost. Though removed from us, you are removed to better society and fairer scenes.

"Present with the Lord." O, happy conquerors! why then do we mourn your removal from such society as ours—infinitely better society is yours. It is true, you are severed for a time from all the tender names of earth; but "dearer, better friends" exist beyond the grave, and those dearer, better friends are yours.

"Present with the Lord." It is this that must complete our happiness, and this is yours. The heavenly mansions would not be so blest were not our God and yours, your Redeemer and ours, there. You see them without the thick veil of flesh between. You are not in a remote province of the heavenly empire. You dwell in the palace itself; for you are "present with the Lord." Happy they who sojourned with the Lord of heaven when he dwelt on earth! but, O more happy,

far more happy you, who see him in his heavenly temple, and see him as he is! Now can you sound his praise in strains to mortal ears unknown; and now enjoy the infinite riches of his love.

"Present with the Lord." Ye dear departed friends what blest employments, what delights, are yours! Eye hath not seen them, ear hath not heard them heart hath not conceived them. Our imaginations trace you through the scenes of mortal converse. We see you as we saw you once, and regret the pleasing hours which you and we once enjoyed—but, O! why regret them? far better employments engage you than those of earth; far better delights are yours than you ever found in wandering, in conversing, in resting with us.

"Worlds would not bribe you back to tread
"Again life's dreary waste,
"To see again your sky o'erspread
"With all the gloomy past."

"Present with the Lord." Ye dear departed, destined to outlive a falling world! ye are not lost! Fain would we have had you continue longer here; but why continue? What is taken from your time is added to your eternity. Our memories tell us of prospects you indulged in for earth and time—and these views are blasted. Yes, blessed disappointment! earth is changed for heaven, and hopes of transient comfort for the fruition of unfailing joy. You formed plans for the voyage, but God took you to the harbor. You sought tranquillity through a few declining days on earth; but he has called you to "rapture and bliss in the skies." You expected to pass a few more days with beloved friends

below; but he has snatched you hence to join with nobler friends above. You bless that friendly wave of time, which, while you thought it was bearing you to some earthly attainment, landed you in heaven.

"Present with the Lord." Blessed conquerors, then are you safe! Had you continued longer here, temptation might have seduced you, Satan might have overcome you, or pernicious error have led you astray; but no temptations now seduce you, no enemies assault you, no errors now mislead you.

"Present with the Lord." Ye dear departed, why do we mourn your happiness? What was it that you prayed for? To be "present with the Lord." What was it that you sought? To be "present with the Lord." Your prayers are answered, your desires fulfilled. And shall we regret this? The children of this world lament not when the labors of their friends are concluded, when the voyages and the battles of those they love are over. But, alas! the children of this world are wiser than the children of light! What is it that we seek? to what most earnestly aspire? for what most anxiously hope? To be "present with the Lord." Beloved, lamented friends, is *this* the summit of our own desires? and was *this* the summit of yours? and yet shall we regret your desires gratified? Rather should we congratulate your departure, while our faith pursues you to your heavenly dwellings.

"Present with the Lord," but not with us; yet may we ere long be so with you. You cannot come again to us, but we may shortly go to you. Our loss is the loss of your beloved society for a little span; but soon will that little span be past. Then we too will leave

our feeble clay-built tabernacles, we too be "absent from the body and present with the Lord."*

§ 24. Admitted to that happy home, and blessed with 'the crown, not of merit, but of grace," the Christian will find all his toils and labors *amply recompensed.* Where but one talent has been possessed, and well improved, the gracious Savior will manifest as much approbation as he will to those who may have had many, but made no more improvement of them. Perhaps, if your abilities are small, and your opportunities of doing good very limited, you may be disposed to anticipate a less share of the Savior's favor than you imagine will be the happiness of those who have many more talents than you. But it is not the number of talents you possess, but the improvement of them, which the eternal Master notices. To him who had five talents intrusted to him, and who could say, "Behold, I have gained beside them five talents more;" his lord said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." But to him who had made an equal improvement of two talents, his lord said, "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou

* Perhaps there may be a propriety in the writer observing that most of this section was written on the evening previous to the funeral of a dear and affectionate, a kind and valuable father, John Baxter Pike; a father to whose care and kindness he is unspeakably indebted—a father, who, to promote the welfare of his family, struggled hard through a chequered and stormy life; and who manifested much peace in the prospect of eternity.

into the joy of thy lord." The number of talents possessed was different, but the improvement was equal, and their lord's expressions of approbation equal. Though all that the blest in heaven will enjoy is undeserved, and all flows from heavenly grace, yet the Savior does teach us, that he will make that reward proportionable to the diligence of his servants. In the parable of the ten pounds delivered to ten servants, the lord said to him who had made the one pound *ten*, Have thou authority over *ten* cities; and to him who made the one pound but *five*, he only said, Have thou authority over *five* cities. In the great reckoning day, and the eternal state, events the most unexpected will take place. Even of those admitted to heaven, many of the first may be last, and the last first. Many wealthy Christians, who were applauded, and eminent in their day, may sink far below the poor believer, who toiled through life in obscurity and want, but whose piety was more fervent, whose heart more liberal, than were those of his wealthier brother. The unfamed tenant of the cottage will often rise higher in glory than the possessors of stately mansions and extensive fame; for in many instances his single talent will be found to have been better improved than their five, or ten, or twenty.

The pious female, only known in the narrow circle of domestic life; the laborious Sabbath-school teacher, all whose energies were employed in training the young for heaven, may, in numberless cases, rise far above ministers of the Gospel, popular and admired in their day, but whose activity in doing good was not proportioned to their opportunities; whose more

splendid talents were not improved so well as the humbler ones of their more pious friends.

Whatever be your situation, let considerations of this kind thus animate you to press forward to eminent piety. The Lord will approve of your feeble attempts to honor him. If all you can do is little, yet do that little, and he will esteem it much. Where nothing more can be imparted, "a cup of cold water only," given to a disciple, "in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose its reward." You cannot exert an humble endeavor for the Savior's glory, however unsuccessful, that will not meet his approbation. With what delight may the Christian exclaim, Compassionate Savior! wilt thou, when seated on thy glorious throne, own my humble attempts to please thee? Shall I share in the honors of thy kingdom, and then be welcomed with thy approbation? Condescending Redeemer! I know I may; and O let this condescending love of thine constrain me to lay at thy feet whatever I possess.

§ 25. Are those your hopes? O soul-reviving hopes! Such blessings might seem all we want, yet more will the Savior's bounty give. To enjoy his presence, to be for ever with the Lord, is the height of heavenly happiness. But another source of joy, shall be the company of all the spirits of the just. The heavenly home is described as their abode. In sweet eternal union there are joined all the angels of light, and all the ransomed heirs of glory.

"'The holy host of saints, that once have known
"Each dreary path in life's perplexing maze,
"There ever circle yon eternal throne
"With harpings high of inexpressive praise."

Of them the word of truth declares, They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God. "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

What glorious joy will union to this blessed family impart! There dwell the great benefactors of mankind, apostles and evangelists, who sacrificed every earthly good to lead immortal multitudes to heaven. There martyrs, dear to our hearts for their faith and patience, rest in eternal repose. There those, the memorials of whose piety has animated ours, all are assembled; and shine far brighter in their Father's kingdom, than they ever shone on earth. Unnumbered millions that never met below, there meet never to part. Amidst that goodly company are doubtless found a Baxter and a Howe, an Elliot and a Brainerd, a Martyn and a Ward, and millions more, perhaps less known on earth, but not less happy in heaven. And now their piety glows with purer lustre; and all the lovely graces that religion produced in their dispositions and characters, are far more lovely there. O glorious happiness, to join that blissful throng! and far from all these polluting and sinful scenes, to spend eternal day with happy myriads of spotless saints and exalted angels!

§ 26. But when you contemplate this happiness, perhaps the inquiry arises, May I hope there to meet the dear companions of my earthly course? May I

hope there to know and love those valued, pious friends, whom I have known and loved upon earth? The Scriptures furnish reasons for believing that the happy inhabitants of heaven shall enjoy this addition to their happiness. The word of God represents some eminent saints, who have left this world, as recognized long after their departure hence. Thus the ransomed are represented as sitting down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Lazarus is described as conveyed to Abraham's bosom, and Dives as knowing Lazarus and Abraham. And at the time of our Lord's transfiguration, the distinguished saints who appeared in glory, (probably as they appear in heaven,) and who conversed with him, were known to be Moses and Elijah There is no reason for supposing, that while these are recognized in the world of glory, it should be altogether unknown who others are, and whence they came. We may rather believe, that as Abraham is there known to be that Abraham who once forsook his country at God's command, saints of later days enjoy the mutual happiness of knowing and being known.

A still more conclusive argument to prove that the blest shall be acquainted with each other, arises from the language of the apostle Paul, in which he expressed his confidence of seeing and recognizing his Christian friends. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" As he expected in a happier state to renew his intimacy with those who had been converted under his ministry at Thessalonica they must mutually know him. The apostle does not mention this as a privilege peculiar to himself: other

laborers in the Savior's vineyard would, without doubt enjoy a similar felicity. But if the minister shall recognize his flock, can we think the pious parent shall be unacquainted with the pious child whom he trained for heaven? Can we suppose that brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, relatives and friends, much and mutually beloved on earth, and helpers of each other in the way to glory, shall not renew their friendship with each other there? Important as is the connection between the pastor and the flock, these connections, when sanctified by grace, are often much more important. Here religious intercourse takes place more dear and more continued; prayers as fervent, and more frequent, are offered in union. Surely we may believe that when the minister meets the people of his charge, the flock he has been instrumental in leading on to heaven; Christian relatives and friends, united in bands as sacred and as strong, will also renew their friendship, and find in the society of each other new delight infused into the bliss even of eternity.

It may further be observed, that the comfort which the Gospel administers to those who mourn friends that sleep in Jesus, appears to be drawn in a great measure from the hope of their happy reunion, and their eternal dwelling in the presence of their Lord. The inspired writer says, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in

Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." The heathen sorrowed without hope, for they had no well founded hope that their departed friends had entered a happy immortality; and their friends once lost, seemed lost for ever: but if pious friends did not meet and recognize each other in heaven, the Christian would be as much without hope of beholding his loved and lost companions, as even the heathen themselves; and if not lost to happiness, they would be lost to him: the moment of death would be the moment of an eternal separation; and what had become of them would be to him unknown. Surely the language of the divine word leads to ideas very different from this! It speaks of these friends being happy, of their coming with their Lord, and then of them and those they left behind being with him for ever. Can this imply any thing less than a happy reunion in his presence?

Have you kindred in the skies? beloved kindred! they bless the hour that set them free from earth and time. Follow their Lord, and you will soon bless that hour which lands you on the happy shore, where death-divided friends, that meet in Christ, shall never part again. There "Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown." Happy they who meet in bliss! Their union is not the union of a day: it is a meeting that will never be followed by a painful parting. How should the hope of it animate those, whom piety unites in death-defying bands, to walk with God, to pray and praise together here, as they hope, through everlasting days, to

praise their God together there! O happy meeting! when they meet, no more to share each other's griefs, no more to mourn each other's woes, no more to grieve for each other's defects; but to share in each other's joys, to triumph in each other's happiness, and mutually to behold friends esteemed so dear and amiable below, infinitely more amiable, as well as eternally glorious and happy.

§ 27. Think too, that all these blessings are *for ever*. The happiness of that world is everlasting. Tears and sorrows, sickness and pain, temptation and danger, sin and death, are excluded for ever. There, where all is peace and praise, all is peace and praise for ever. O, blissful day! may the Christian think, when I shall see my Savior! when I shall be with him, and be like him. Then shall I see, and know, and love, and praise my Lord, more and better through eternal days! Eternal days! who shall unfold the meaning of those transporting words—Eternal days? O look forward beyond the end of time. Let faith assist you to discern the state of the just when time shall be no more. Think that you see the scenes of eternal judgment finishing. The archangel's trumpet has sounded, and is hushed in silence, never to sound again; the ransomed myriads of the blest have heard the gracious sentence of their Lord, and received the crown of glory that fadeth not away. All the eventful scenes of life, of death, of judgment are concluded; and now behold them—where are they—in heaven—around them all is happy. Their views, joys, praises, friends, and home eternally the same; their sorrows, cares, and sighings for ever fled away. "Violence shall no more be heard in their

land, wasting nor destruction within their borders; but they shall call their walls Salvation, and their gates Praise. The sun shall be no more their light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto them: but the Lord shall be unto them an everlasting light, and their God their glory. Their sun shall no more go down; neither shall their moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended." Before them all is glorious. Before them stretches one immense eternal day of bliss. They see no end, they fear no ill. How brightly shines the sun of their happiness! how happily glide on the infinite ages of their felicity! Go forward in thought myriads of numberless ages. Imagine years as countless as the blades of grass that cover the ground, or as the drops that fill the ocean, to have passed away. Then look again at the inhabitants of heaven; their day is still bright. No cloud has darkened its glory in the immense duration that has passed. Their happiness is still undiminished. No transient pain has brought a momentary interruption of their felicity in all the mighty periods that are gone. For no moment, during all those countless ages, has the stain of imperfection polluted them. No ruffling passion has ever been felt within their peaceful breasts. The light of God's countenance has never been withdrawn. No foes without, no fears or corruptions within, have disturbed the sweet composure of their happy spirits. Through periods so long, that, compared with them, time and all its ages is the twinkling of an eye, the unruffled day of heaven has glided blissfully along. Nor do they mourn its departure; eternal day is not shortened; eternal felicity is not lessened. The im-

mense and amazing prospect of everlasting life still stretches before their view, as bright, as fair, as gladdening, and as long as ever. Happy conquerors! Imagination fails, and cannot reach their blessedness, nor comprehend what it is to be enjoying heaven.

The eternal God is their Father, and they are for ever with the Lord. But O! what no heart can conceive, no imagination comprehend, you, my brother, or my sister, may enjoy. Be thou faithful unto death, and that eternal day will cheer your soul with infinite delight, and raise your raptures to heights of infinite felicity; while you look back to the stormy scenes of time, to the day of danger and conflict, to the solemnities of death and judgment, and exult that these are for ever finished; that redeeming love has fixed you safe in heaven; and that now vast, boundless, joyful eternity, will be to you one long, immense, infinite scene of unmingled tranquillity, praise, and pleasure, in the presence of God and of the Lamb. O what is life in the view of this happiness! What its cares, pleasures, pains, but shadows lighter than vanity! O what is redeeming love, that opens to your soul these triumphant prospects!

§ 28. *Soon* will all the glories of the bright scenes dawn upon the faithful soul. Though eternal day will never end, eternal day will soon begin. When the husbandman commits his seed to the ground, a few wintry days revolve, a few bright suns shine, a few moons wax and wane, and the harvest comes, and the ripened crop is gathered into the garner. So fast comes the harvest of eternity. The Christian's happiest days are hastening him forward to its solemn scenes, and the sad and gloomy days of darkness are

carrying him as fast to the world where gloomy seasons and distressing days are unknown for ever. The Christian's state in this world is like that of a mariner pursuing a long voyage, yet tending to his native land. Month after month, all he beholds is the ocean and the sky. When within a day's sail of home, he still sees nothing but sea and sky: the unvarying prospect is the same as it was months before: yet his situation is very different; then he was far from harbor, now a few hours will bring him there. So the Christian hastening to heaven, sees no more of that happy home than he did when entering his course, yet he is nearer every hour. He is drawing apace to the harbor, though he sees it not, and in a little while will enter there.

§ 29. If grace has made you a partaker of the hope of that felicity, *draw comfort* from that hope; anticipate that heaven. When meditation leads your contemplations beyond the narrow bounds of time, then think, Am I to walk those heavenly fields? Am I to dwell in those regions of light? Then what is this world to me? Am I, born as it were but yesterday, and hastening to a grave, to live in glory, when sun and stars, with all their glory, shall expire? Am I, unmoved, to behold "the wreck of nature and the crush of worlds," to see, without regret, the bright lights of heaven sink into eternal darkness; and then shall I, amid the blest inhabitants of heaven, rejoice that my day of glory and happiness will never, never end? Then shall I, with all the blood-bought nations of the saved, walk in the light of the heavenly city, and dwell before the throne of God? Rise then, my soul, rise to thy blissful home. There place thy treasures; there

lay up thy store; there fix thy love; there hope to praise thy Savior and thy Lord; and wait and watch, till he shall call thee home.

Daily cherish the thoughts of that felicity, and strive, and pray, by meditation, to check unreasonable attachment to this dying world; to sit loose to all below; and to live as one who hopes ere long to live in heaven. Why are not the followers of the Lamb more eager for their rest? does the sailor, tossed by storms, long once more to reach his home? the child desire manhood? the sick man health? the tradesman pant for riches? the prisoner for liberty? the condemned for pardon? and should not you desire the blessedness you seek? Is heaven indeed the object of your choice, and your wished-for home, why not more eager for it? How unreasonable to love a dangerous journey more than a peaceful rest? a boisterous ocean more than the safe and pleasant harbor! Who loves the ship that wafts him over raging waters, more than the country where all who are dearest to him dwell? Who loves the horse on which he rides, or the carriage in which he travels, more than the dear home where he rests in peace? Alas, such is their attachment to this world, who are the heirs of a better. We profess to take heaven for our home; we know that all, and more than all, that recommends our earthly dwellings, is found in the eternal mansions—friends that should be the dearest, and to whom we are most dear—the surest refuge; the securest rest; and yet how often have we little familiarity with that better country! How much ado has God to get us home! Ah, stupified hearts! to love a journey, a toilsome, a dangerous

journey, more than an everlasting home, whence toils and dangers are banished for ever. Watch against this dangerous, this guilty fondness for the present state. Think much of heaven. If your home is there, your heart must be there. You would not think much of the affection of a friend who might forget you at the moment of parting, and think of you no more till you met again. We should not value a person's professed fondness for his family or home, who could travel days and weeks without thinking of them; nor can we think much of their attachment to heaven, who go days and weeks without having their thoughts and affections rising thither. Watch against that too common sin, much forgetfulness of a better world.

§ 30. He who has thus, in the preceding pages, endeavored to help you in your spiritual pilgrimage, is now about to lay down his pen; yet before he lays it down, probably for ever, let him once more say to you *Go onward*, looking to Jesus, and keeping God and heaven in view. Then, ere long, when summoned hence, you may depart in peace, and say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Farewell, vain world! Farewell, scenes of transient fondness and dissolving affection! Farewell, world of real grief, but fancied pleasures! Farewell, sin, and with sin, farewell sorrow! But welcome, bright and blessed immortality! Welcome the scenes of indissoluble love! Welcome the mansions in my Father's house! Welcome the kingdom of my redeeming Lord! the dwell-

ing of joy, the crown of glory! Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage, but now those few and evil days have come to their end; and I enter an eternity, where days, and weeks, and months, and years have no place, but all is one eternal day. Happy are they, who, being washed in the blood of the Lamb, ascend at the end of life's short pilgrimage to that endless rest. Happy they, whose blessedness it is, that the holy Savior prepares heaven for them, and them for heaven. May this be your happiness, who have now been reading these pages! When neglecters of the Gospel, in overwhelming sadness, exclaim, The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved—when those who have slighted the Savior's love, vainly shrinking from the eternal Judge's wrath, say "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb"—then, and through eternity, may you, with ransomed millions, unite in the sweet and everlasting anthem, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

§ 31. Probably some who may glance over the preceding pages are destitute of an interest in all the blessings there described. Is this the case with you, whose eyes are now fixed upon this little book? Are you a careless profligate? an open scoffer? or an almost Christian? If either be the case, let me beseech you to reflect on your dreadful condition. Whatever you are, if you are not an humble follower of the Savior, your state is fearful in the extreme. In those blessings that have been described as the Christian's portion, you have no share. God is not your reconciled Father;

Jesus Christ is not your Shepherd; heaven is not your home. As sure as the Scriptures are true, you are an heir of death, a slave of Satan, a child of wrath, an enemy of God, a traveler to hell. Every moment you are on the brink of destruction. There is only the breath in your nostrils between you and hell; and nothing is wanted to sink you there but God's command. A cold, an accident, or almost any trifle, may be sufficient to cut your thread of life, and plunge you in eternal despair. There is no wide gulf between you and the torments of eternal fire, the howlings of accursed spirits, and the horrors of damnation. The place of misery is your own place: you are ready for it. Your sins are all unpardoned—wrath follows you—hell is waiting to receive you. Death, your dread foe, is drawing nigh. Your last moment, your last comfort, are approaching. In Christ you have no interest. For you his death is vain. In heaven you have no inheritance. There is a blessed heaven, but not for you. Unhappy creature! you may trifle with this warning, but trifling will not alter your condition, or save your ruined soul. You may laugh or scoff at fervent piety, but will you laugh in the sad world of misery? When lost for ever; when before you is eternal night; when millions of years of misery will not lessen your wretchedness, nor seas of tears efface one guilty stain; when the world is gone, and every pleasure gone, and your soul lost, eternally lost; then what will you think of a slighted Savior and a neglected Gospel? O, my fellow-sinner, think of eternity! think of eternal banishment from heaven! think of eternal wailings and despair in hell! If the Savior's love soften not your heart, let his terrors alarm you! Flee from the wrath to come! Ere long, if you had

them, you would gladly give millions of worlds for an opportunity to flee from endless wrath; but it will be too late then. O pity yourself! it is not too late now! You may have mercy, will you reject it? The Savior would have compassion upon you, can you have so little for yourself as to neglect his great salvation? O pity an unhappy creature condemned to die! you are that unhappy creature. Seek mercy, while mercy may be found! God Almighty make you so wise and so happy. Yet if you will not, if you will continue to slight a dying Savior, a gracious God, and your own immortal soul, then make the most of your few vain delights. They are all you will ever have. Rather remember that perhaps the decree is gone forth already against you, Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? O have compassion on yourself, and seek those blessings now, which, on the bed of death, at the day of judgment, and through vast eternity, you will wish to have obtained. May the God of all grace make you thus wise and happy! and raise you from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness! Amen.

END.

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